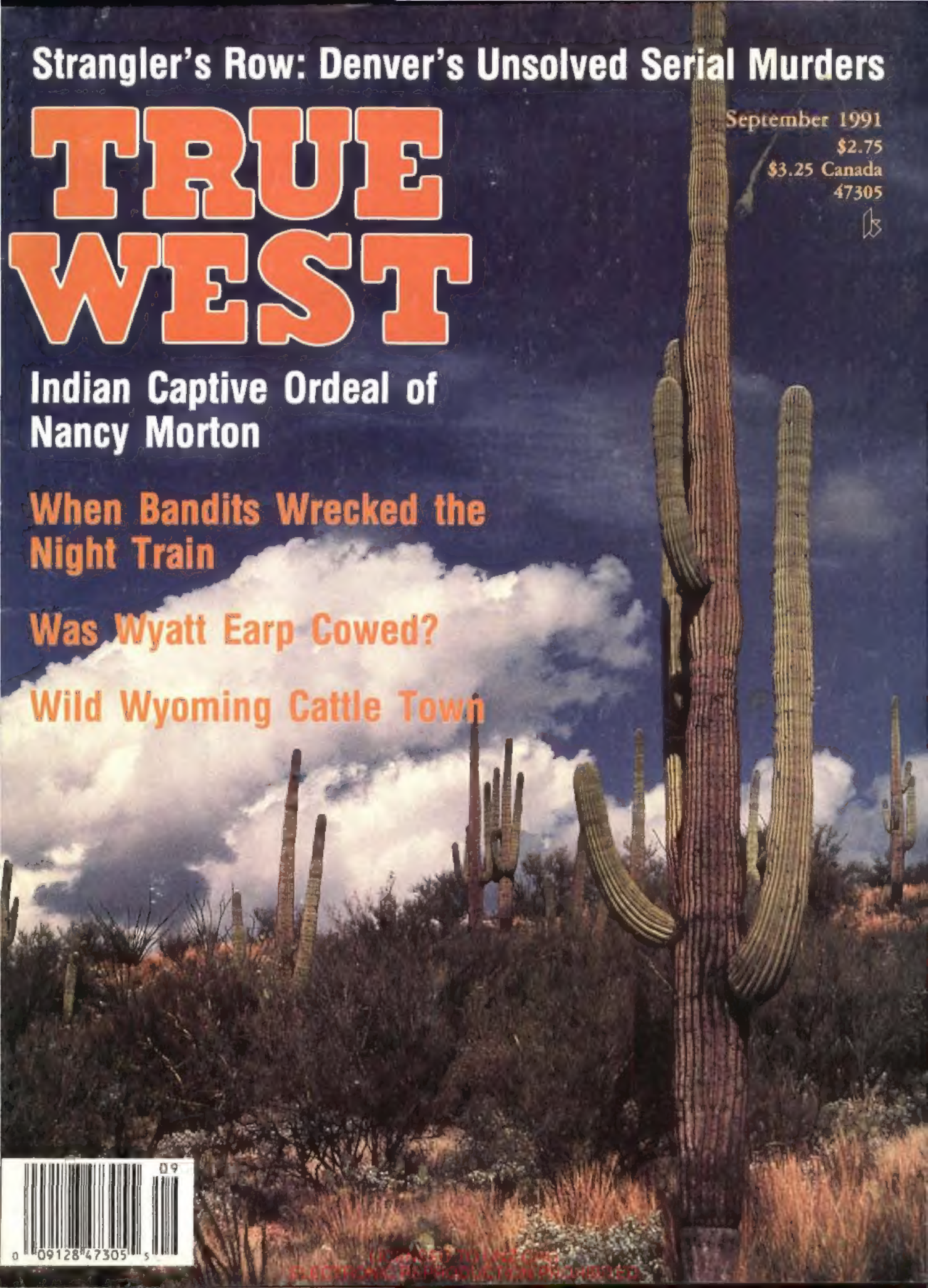
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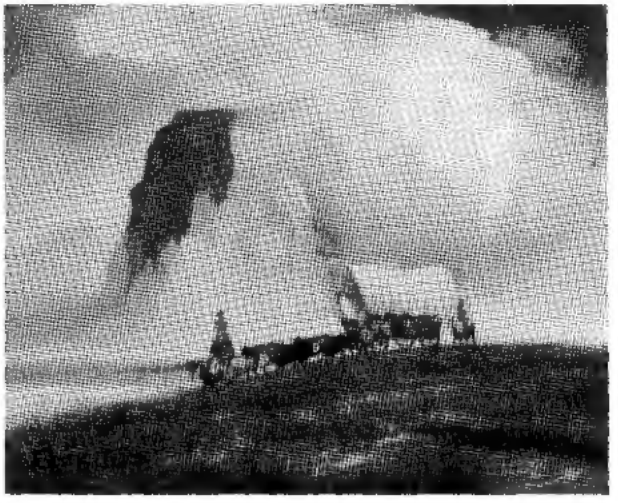

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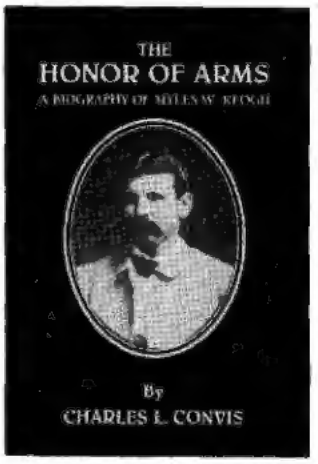

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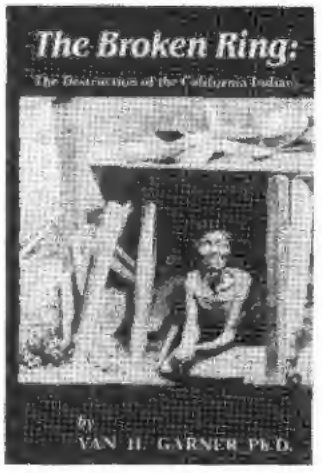

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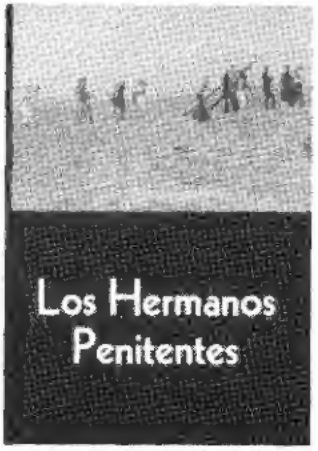

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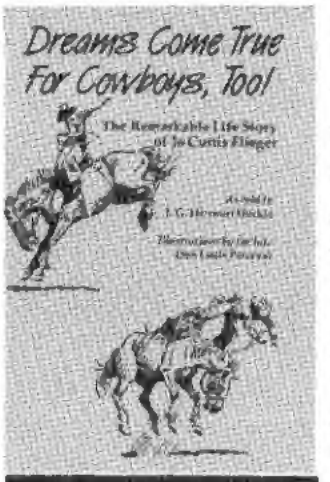

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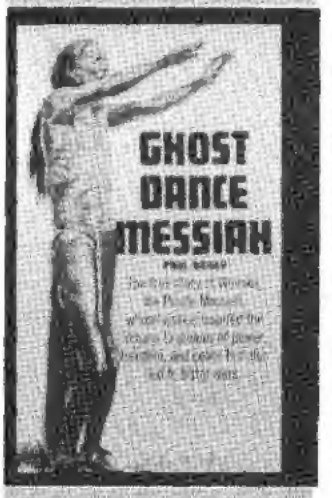

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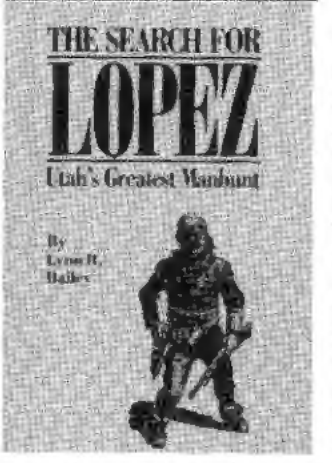

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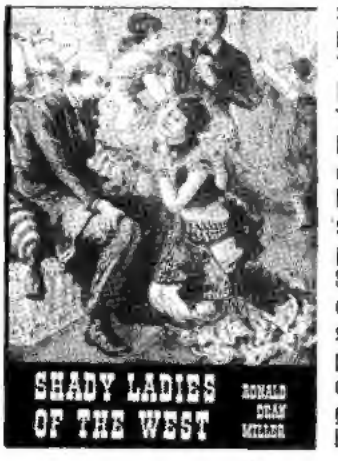

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TRUE WEST

September 1991
Vol. 38, No. 9
Whole No. 281

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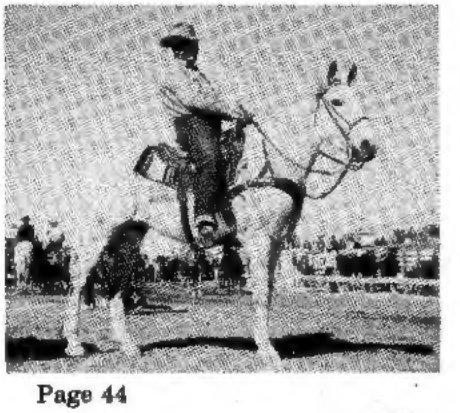

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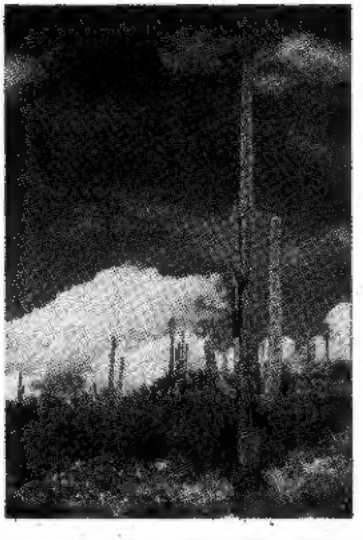

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From the Editor

Howdy, folks!

I'm back, which will surprise those of you who didn't know I'd left and disappoint those of you who were hoping I'd go away. Ever' now and then, I manage to work loose the ropes tying me in this chair and get away from the office. Last May 30 through June 2—just a couple weeks ago as I write this—I escaped to the National Cowboy Symposium and Celebration in Lubbock, Texas.

If you ever want to have a plain, old-fashioned good time, that annual event is the place to have it. Don't be scairt away by the fact that some varmint let the word *symposium* slip into the whingding's title. I've accidentally stumbled into a few symposiums in my time, and for quite a spell I reckoned *symposium* was a polite word for what I had to scrape off my shoes, what with all the ever-so-serious papers and what-not being read and argued about.

So when I was invited to attend a *cowboy* symposium, I had to reach for my beat-up old Webster's to make sure I knew where I was going before I said I'd come. Sure enough, there it was, "a formal meeting at which several specialists deliver short addresses on a topic or on related topics." Can't you just picture cowboys delivering short addresses at a formal meeting when they could be doing something safe like riding bulls or roping panthers?

Then I recollected as how once upon a time in another life I had heard that the word *symposium* is derived from the Greek roots *syn* and *pinein*, which thrown together and turned around loosely translate as "drinking party." Now that sounded more like the cowboys I know, but I couldn't quite imagine myself trying to keep up with genuine working cowboys on a four-day binge in the big city, nor could I quite imagine the good people of Texas Tech University, which puts on this so-called symposium, associating themselves with an end-of-the-trail, all-out blowout.

A mite bewildered, I took one last, desperate look at my dictionary and discovered a couple other definitions: "a convivial party (as after a banquet in ancient Greece) with music and conversation" and "a social gathering at which there is free interchange of ideas."

That all had me curious as an antelope staring at a bandanna tied to the end of a rifle barrel, and I figured the only way to find out just what kind of symposium is a cowboy symposium was to go and sympose along with the rest of 'em—field research, you know—so I went.

This is what I found out. The National Cowboy Symposium and Celebration is heavy on the music, conversation, and free interchange of ideas, and I'd say it's mighty convivial if I knew for sure what that means. The events included performances by great western musicians such as Jim Bob Tinsley and Patsy Montana; poets the likes of Waddy Mitchell; a reading by Curt Brummet, who just might be the funniest cowboy alive; dancin'; eatin'; and, lest we forget what it's really about, ridin' and ropin'.

I do enjoy a dose of modern cowboy poetry and singing movie cowboys oncet in a while, but I have to admit a personal preference for the historical aspects of ranching culture. "Music, conversation, and the free exchange of ideas" along those lines was plentiful. For authentic, old-time cowboy songs, Guy Logsdon is hard to beat, and to hear Joyce Roach, who also happens to be a fine Texas lady and writer, sing the songs of the nineteenth-century pioneers gave me goose bumps.

The panel discussion (yes, folks, they do have panels of the non-truck variety, but they're hardly "formal") on cowboy humor was worth the price of admission, especially when Kenneth Davis, a heck of a nice feller who teaches English at Texas Tech, got to goin' on about how the physical cruelty in cowboy humor is "in the serious dramatic tradition of Terence, Plautus, and Shakespeare"—the last of which was the only one I could find on the map to check its spelling. It was Kenneth who inspired me to afflict you all with this here editorial about the Greek origins of the term *symposium*. Now that Westerners are supposed to have culture, I didn't want to be out-cultured by some fancy-talkin' college professor.

So, folks, you don't have to have an alphabet after your name to enjoy the Cowboy Symposium, but you likewise don't have to be a cowboy or even look like one. I guess you could say I have too much respect for the uniform to wear boots and a Stetson myself, but I do say "howdy," and I had plenty of opportunities to do so in Lubbock.

John Joerschke

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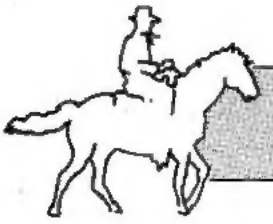

Truly Western

"Hurricane Bill"

I enjoyed R.K. DeArment's interesting article on "Hurricane Bill" Martin (TRUE WEST, June 1991). Hurricane Bill certainly had a long, wild, and crazy career as a horse thief. It's too bad Martin's trail grew dim; I'd love to know what happened to him in his later years.—**Paul Hoylen, Jr., 221 W. Pine, Deming, New Mexico, 88030.**

Prospecting for Silver City

I believe that Virginia Reeves, whose letter, "Silver City, Colorado?" ran in the July TRUE WEST, has her dates wrong. A Silver City, Colorado, existed near St. Mary's Glacier and below St. Mary's Lake on Fall River. It was near the towns of Dumont and Idaho Springs. According to Perry Eberhart's *Guide to the Colorado Ghost Towns and Mining Camps*, Silver City didn't amount to much more than tents and brush huts, though its population reached about 1,000. The ores around Silver City soon proved unprofitable, and the camp was abandoned within a year of its beginnings. Keep up the good work for a fine magazine.—**Fritz Hellwig, 120 N. Washington, Eagle Grove, Iowa 50533.**

Editor's Note: I appreciate the information, sir. We only have two copies of Perry Eberhart's fine book in our library. If we had three I might have thought to consult it myself.

Rodeo Photographer

I enjoyed Willard Porter's article, "One From the Old School," about John "Tackhead" Bowman (TRUE WEST, February 1991). It was especially interesting to me because I did rodeo photography all over the Pacific Northwest for many years, as did Devere Helfrich, from Oregon. I met and photographed many cowboys as well as female trick riders such as Button Woods and Cheri Lee Moorman. I remember Tack Bowman, Dick Truitt, Everett Shaw, Casey Tibbs, Joe Black, Bud Linderman, Wick Peth, and many others. Rodeos aren't what they used to be—they're too commercial.—**Walt Thayer, P.O. Box 2195, Wenatchee, Washington 98807.**

Editor's Note: But the rodeo competitors sure don't complain about the higher purses!

Charbonneau's Other Gravesite

Regarding "Who Is Buried in Baptiste Charbonneau's Grave?" in "Truly

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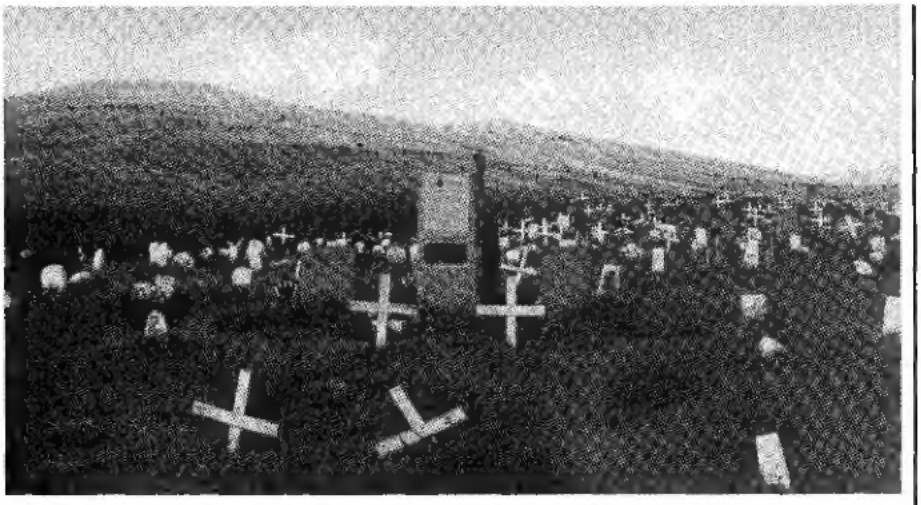

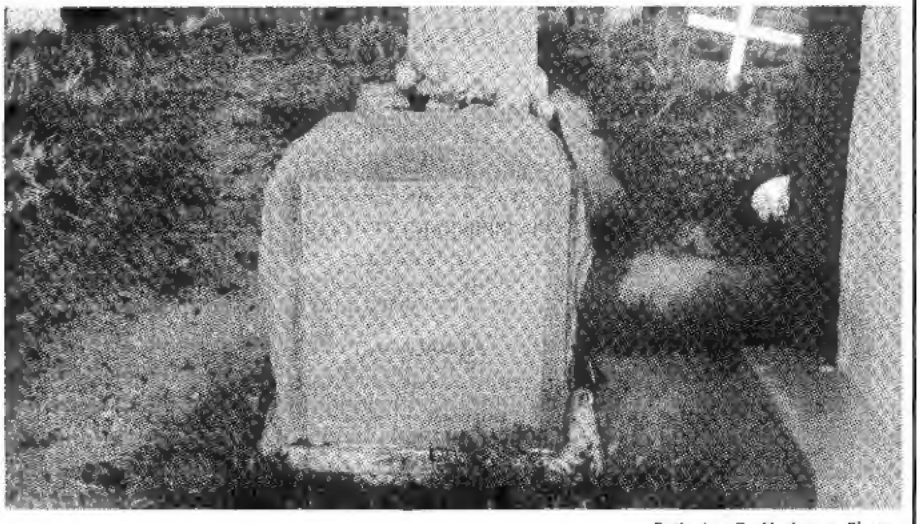

Both: Ian D. Matheson Photos

Top: The tall tombstone at center of photo is thought by some people to mark the grave of Sacagawea. Bottom: Her son, Baptiste Charbonneau, is said to be buried beside her.

Western" (TRUE WEST, March 1991), I am enclosing several pictures of his grave at Fort Washakie near Lander, Wyoming. Or perhaps the monument is merely a memorial, as it reads, "Dedicated in the memory of . . ." The photographs were taken last September.—**Ian D. Matheson, 119 S.W. Normandy Road, Seattle, Washington 98116.**

Editor's Note: Thanks, pard, for sending the photos. I'm among those who believe Charbonneau is buried in Oregon and that Sacagawea, his mother, is buried in North Dakota. But bein's how we believe in giving equal time to both sides of controversial issues, the photos are shown here. You all will have to make up your own minds about the fates of Sacagawea and her family.

Born in Indian Territory

I first discovered TRUE WEST while waiting in a barber shop in Muskogee, Oklahoma, about eighteen years ago, and I've been a subscriber ever since.

Having been born an Okie in Muldrow, Indian Territory, in 1906 and having lived around Sallisaw until I was grown, I am familiar with folks like the Jodes in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Sallisaw was the part-time home of Henry Starr, Ed Lockhart, Charlie Floyd, and others.

I was there in about 1926 when the Vian cops notified Sallisaw that a stolen car had passed through, headed east. Deputy Sheriffs Perry Chuculate, Bert Cotton, and Dan Sharps, along with Town Marshal J.C Woll, went out to Sallisaw Creek to intercept them. Chuculate was killed; Sharps got his hair parted; and Woll and a farmer who stopped to see what was going on were taken hostage in Sharps' new Star automobile.

The outlaws were George and Matt Kimes, who had robbed a bank in a nearby town. A posse captured them at their grandfather's place north of Van Buren and took them back to Sallisaw.

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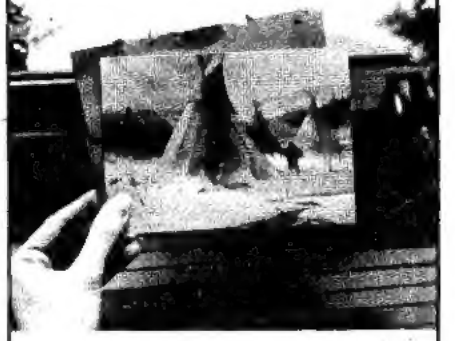

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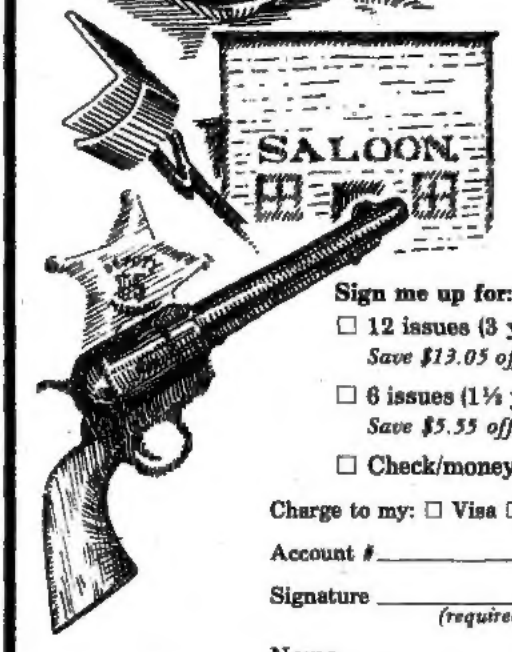

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Some friends liberated them, but they were later recaptured, tried, and sentenced to the penitentiary in McAlester.

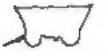
This is the first time I have ever written to a magazine. For years I meant to drop a line to Joe Small, but never did. I felt like I knew him. The chief reason for this missive is to subscribe for some special people in my life so they can start enjoying your stories. Please notify me when renewal time comes around.—**John W. Baker, 275 North Road, Shelburne, New Hampshire 03501.**

Editor's Note: I reckon your first letter ever to a magazine merits a special thanks, so here it is: "Thanks!" for your letter and for giving TRUE WEST to your friends. But what I want to know is how in tarnation an Okie ever ended up in New Hampshire. (And didn't you know that Oklahomans are supposed to deny that anyone even vaguely resembling the Jodes ever existed?)

Dying for Death Valley Stories

I enjoy reading every issue of TRUE WEST. Can you give us some stories on Death Valley, California. We went there about fifteen years ago, and I think it is one of the best historical places in the West. I've traveled in every state west of the Mississippi River and always enjoy the history of the frontier days. Keep up the good work!—**Mel Anderson, 3024 N. 78th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222.**

Editor's Note: I'll be keeping my eyes open for good yarns about Death Valley. I've mentioned to you all before that we pretty much have to depend on underpaid and underappreciated freelance writers for the stories we run, and it's been a while since I got any good, new material on Death Valley; I imagine the floor of that inferno is littered with the bones of brave writers who perished in pursuit of stories for TRUE WEST mag.



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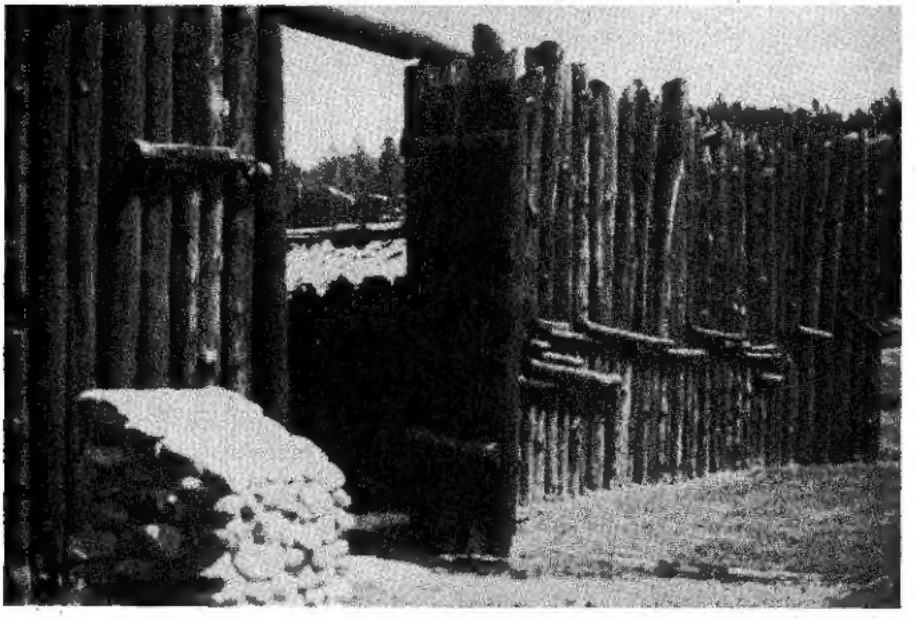
Gordon Stockade Offers Living History

By C.E. JOHNSON



Author's Photo

The front gate of the reconstructed Gordon Stockade, near Custer, South Dakota.

After the United States Army confirmed the presence of gold in the Black Hills of South Dakota in 1874, many gold-seekers managed to evade War Department orders banning prospecting there. The first such group was the Gordon party: twenty-six men, one woman, and her nine-year-old son. When the army eventually ran them out of the area, the prospectors left behind a stockade that today gives insight into life at a nineteenth century gold camp.

John Gordon, who had helped Charles Collins and T.H. Russell organize the civilian expedition in Sioux City, Iowa, led the group. The organizers had hoped to attract one hundred people, but warnings from military advisers and fear of Indian trouble scared off all but the hardiest souls.

Outfitted with the essentials, this small band of adventurers struck out on October 6, 1874. To deceive the army, they left Sioux City heading southwest, posing as a colonization party until they reached O'Neill, Nebraska. From there, they turned northwest into Dakota Territory.

The party managed to travel only fifteen to twenty miles per day due to frozen conditions on the prairie. As the cold weather persisted, illness took its toll and one man, Moses Aarons, died on November 27. The travelers' morale fell, but three days later they sighted the Black Hills.

The party entered the mountain range from the north on December 9, 1874, and camped two miles south of present-day Piedmont, South Dakota. Another winter storm impeded their progress, and they did not reach the goldfields until December 23.

Their first concern was to build a stockade for protection from Indian attack. They began the walls of the stockade by first digging three-foot holes into the frozen ground. In the holes they placed sixteen-foot logs. The walls were built with lookout bastions and loopholes for riflemen. The only en-

(continued on page 10)

Kick & Growl

Cheyenne Hosts Tom Horn Event

He was a scout, stock detective, gunman, and a widely-suspected assassin. Tom Horn was—and is—one of the most intriguing figures in the American West. This September, for the second year in a row, Cheyenne, Wyoming, will be the site of the "Tom Horn Kick & Growl," a three-day series of events built around the life of Tom Horn.

Much of the Kick & Growl focuses on Horn's life after he allegedly shot thirteen-year-old Willie Nickell, son of Wyoming sheepman Kels Nickell, on July 19, 1901. Horn was convicted of the killing, largely on the basis of a controversial confession obtained by Deputy United States Marshal Joe LeFors. Horn was housed in the Laramie County Jail in Cheyenne, and he and outlaw Jim McCloud made an abortive jail break in August 1903. Horn was hanged on November 20, 1903, the Wyoming State Supreme Court having upheld his conviction in the Nickell case.

The Kick & Growl begins Friday, September 20, with a catered supper, a slide presentation of important sites in the Tom Horn story, a historical presentation entitled "Tom Horn—Anachronism and Enigma," and a Tom Horn and Schoolmarm look-alike contest. These events will begin at 6:00 p.m. at the Old West Museum in Frontier Park.

Events on Saturday begin at 8:30 a.m. with an "Old-Timers' Yarnery"—reminiscences of Wyoming pioneer descendants—at the Holiday Inn. The event will be enhanced with a wide-screen television and sound amplification. At 10:30 a.m. a "funeral cortege" leaves the motel for a tour of Cheyenne's cemeteries, where more than two dozen of Horn's contemporaries are buried. Guided walking tours of downtown Cheyenne leave the Union Pacific Depot at 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. Participants will see many of the buildings in which Horn and associates worked and caroused, and where Horn made his disputed confession to LeFors. At the site of the Old Courthouse at 3:45 p.m. visitors will see

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Gordon Stockade

(continued from page 9)

trance faced French Creek and was barred by a heavy, bullet-proof double gate. Loop holes covering the entrance provided additional protection. The thirteen-foot-high wall enclosed a square eighty feet on a side; the party completed it during their first week in the valley.

During the second week they built seven cabins within the stockade walls. One of them had a sod roof to allay the fears of the lone woman, Annie Tallent, who feared fire arrows.

The party moved into the stockade and settled in for what promised to be a long, cold winter. The majority of the gold-seekers had been merchants and farmers and had no experience hunting game; the few frontiersmen in the group had to instruct the others.

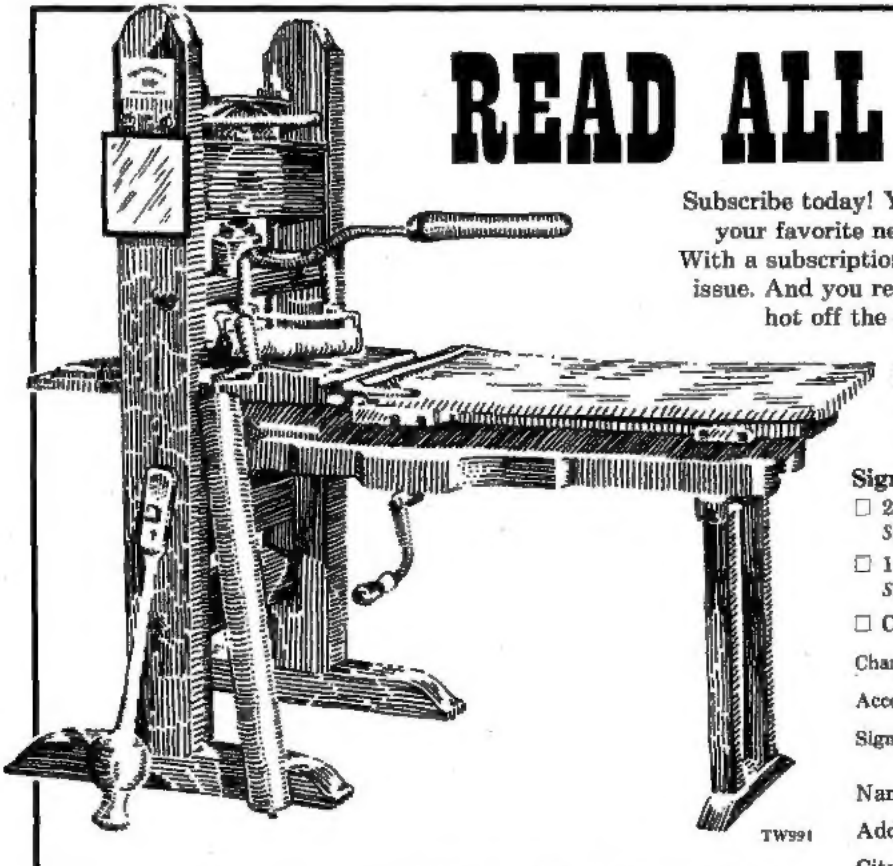
The people of the Gordon stockade spent their spare time panning for gold in, or prospecting along, French Creek, but the bitter cold made it miserable work. After a month the group had less than forty dollars in gold among them. On the other hand, they had avoided detection by Indians and the cavalry, and had established a permanent settlement. They were sure that the gold diggings would improve if they had more men and equipment.

To remedy the situation, Gordon and Eph Witcher decided to return to Sioux City for more supplies and additional men. They left camp on February 6, 1875, taking gold as proof of their success and also messages for families and friends of party members. Upon arriving in Sioux City twenty-three days later, the two men received a hero's welcome. Immediately Gordon began to organize another expedition, but as it began its trip cavalrymen intercepted the wagon train. Soldiers disbanded the party of 176 and placed Gordon under military surveillance.

Meanwhile, cabin fever, low rations, and ongoing cold weather brought the defection of several members from the Gordon stockade. They had barely begun the long trek out of the Black Hills when troopers of the Seventh Cavalry overtook them. Cavalrymen escorted them back to the stockade and gave the remaining members one day to pack and make ready to be escorted to Cheyenne, Wyoming. Many of the Gordon party gave up the search for gold and returned to their families and jobs in Sioux City, but several were caught trying to return to the Black Hills.

Between 1875 and 1925, the Gordon stockade sat abandoned, with vandals and time taking their toll. In 1925 the citizens of Custer, South Dakota, became interested in restoring nearby historic properties, and the walls and cabins of the Gordon stockade were rebuilt using descriptions given by Annie Tallent and a Captain Mix, one of the cavalrymen who forced the Gordon party out of the Black Hills.

Today the Gordon Stockade is part of the Custer State Park, four miles east of Custer on Highway 16A. Reenactors present a living history program within the stockade from June through August. They portray members of the Gordon party and give demonstrations of the skills required for daily life, such as cooking, candlemaking, soapmaking, and black-powder rifle marksmanship. The demonstrations are held on Mon-



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days, Thursdays, and Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

There is no charge to visit the fort, although there is a charge to visit the park. A week-long, drive-through pass is available at park entrances, giving visitors access to lodges, picnic areas, and wildlife loop roads. The roads offer a unique view of nearby Mount Rushmore. Visitors may also see begging burros, prairie dog towns, mountain goats, deer, and herds of bison. For camping and other information about the park contact Custer State Park Headquarters, H.C. 83, Box 70, Custer, South Dakota 57730. The phone number is (605) 225-4515.

Cheyenne's Tom Horn Kick & Growl

(continued from page 9)

a reenactment of Horn's August 9, 1903, jailbreak. All of these events are free.

Also on Saturday, at 7:15 p.m. in the Civic Center, will be a reenactment of Horn's trial entitled "State of Wyoming vs. Tom Horn." The production, in its second year, is based on actual testimony given at the trial. The first 100 people to buy reenactment tickets receive special seating on the jury. The evening will end with the "Grand Beefeater's Bash and Stomp and Old-Fashioned Social" at 9:00 p.m. at the Old West Museum.

At 10:00 a.m. Sunday there will be a guided tour to the site of Willie Nickell's killing. The trip is limited to 150 people and will include a catered lunch. The tour into the Iron Mountain country north of Cheyenne is not scheduled to be repeated, as the locale is on a private cattle ranch.

Tom Horn exhibits, including the gunman's Winchester, are scheduled to be on display along with an art show at the Old West Musuem throughout the event. Mock holdups and gunfights are also scheduled.

For additional information write the Cheyenne Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, 301 West 16th Street, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001, or phone (307) 778-1401.

Western Roundup is a report on places to go and things to see associated with the history of the Old West. Submissions are welcome. Information on scheduled events should be submitted at least four months prior to the event. Items on historic places are also welcome. Send information including photos to: Western Roundup, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076.

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Henry Newton Brown: Marshal

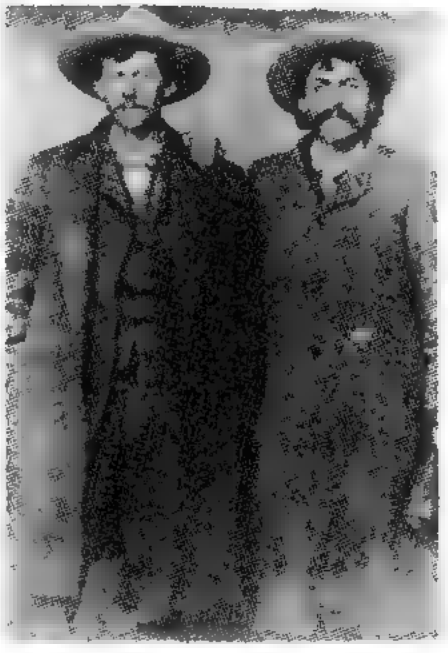
By CHUCK PARSONS

Henry Newton Brown was a marshal of Caldwell, Kansas. Tim Rutherford, 832 Bush, Toledo, Ohio 43604, wrote to ask if he was the same Henry Brown who rode with Billy the Kid.

At the time Brown served as a Caldwell lawman, it was common knowledge that he had earlier ridden with the Kid in the Lincoln County War. After having left Lincoln County, Brown spent some time in Texas, where he served as marshal of Tascosa. He then settled in Caldwell and was named assistant city marshal in July 1882. *The Caldwell Post* described Brown as "one of the quickest men on the trigger in the Southwest." By October he was appointed acting city marshal in the absence of his boss. He served the position well and earned a third appointment to the job in April 1884.

On April 30 Brown lost the respect of Caldwell citizens when he and three others tried to rob the Medicine Valley bank at Medicine Lodge, Kansas. Brown, his assistant marshal, Ben Wheeler, and John Wesley and Billy Smith were captured. They never stood trial as Brown was shot dead trying to escape a mob that lynched the others.

It is beyond question that Henry Brown, city marshal of Caldwell and the man who died after a failed bank robbery attempt, was the same Henry Brown who sided with Billy the Kid. Lengthy newspaper articles dealing with Brown's career in Caldwell are printed in *Why the West Was Wild,* edited by Nyle H. Miller and Joseph W. Snell. A book-length biography, *Henry Brown, the Outlaw-Marshal,* by Bill O'Neal, is also available.



Robert N. Mullin Collection, N.S. Haley Memorial Library, Midland, Texas
Henry Newton Brown (left) and Fred Waite.

Last Mounted Bank Robbery

Harry Wilson, 327 West 11th Street, New York City, New York 10014, has written with an interesting question: when, where, and by whom was the last authenticated robbery of a bank or train by men on horseback committed?

I may be incorrect—and readers may have to help me—but I will suggest March 27, 1915, when Henry Starr and six others tried to rob two banks at once in Stroud, Oklahoma. He and three men entered the Stroud State Bank while three others entered the First National. Starr obtained some money, but a seventeen-year-old boy named Paul Curry shot and wounded him before he got away on horseback. Curry also shot Lewis Estes. Starr was imprisoned but paroled on March 15, 1919, only to return to his old ways.

On February 18, 1921, using an automobile this time, Starr attempted to rob the People's National Bank of Harrison, Arkansas. W.J. Myers mortally wounded Starr there.

The Cook Gang

The Cook gang flourished in Oklahoma Territory in 1894. William C. Bisso, Sr., Route 2, Box 2531, St. James, Missouri 65559, wrote to ask for more information on the Cook gang.

William Tuttle Cook, born December 19, 1873, was the gang leader. His younger brother James, born in 1877, was also a gang member for a while. The boys were orphaned at an early age, and cowboyed for a time, then started selling whiskey to Indians. In 1894 Crawford "Cherokee Bill" Goldsby joined the gang, which numbered about twenty. On June 16, 1894, the Cooks, Goldsby, and Bob Harden robbed the Tahlequah stage and killed a deputy. Harden was captured and sentenced to eight years in the Cherokee national prison for murder. He escaped and was soon killed in an argument.

On July 7 the gang robbed the Fort Gibson-Muskogee stage. Two weeks later, the band, now including Bill Cook, Goldsby, Lonnie Gordon, Sam McWilliams, Henry Munson, and Curtis Dayson, broke into the railroad depot at Red Fork, south of Tulsa, but failed to find any money. On the last day of July they became bolder and robbed the Lincoln County Bank at Chandler. Deputies caught up with some of them in early August, capturing Ad Berryhill and killing Gordon and Munson.

On October 20 gang members held up their first train in a robbery near Muskogee. The next day they raided the town of Watova, and the following day raided stores in Talala.

Getting braver, the gang attacked a train at Blackstone Switch near Wyback. Unknown to them, guards were stationed in the express car. A gunfight followed and gang member Charles Belston fell dead; deputies captured Nathanial "Texas Jack" Reed. By the end of 1894 gang members Thurman "Skeeter" Baldwin, William Farris, Charles Turner, and Jesse Snyder were all in prison. Elmer Lucas and Curtis Dayson were already serving time in the Detroit Correctional Institution.

By December, Bill Cook felt the end coming and fled toward Mexico. He did not run fast enough as two lawmen, Sheriff T.D. Love of Borden County, Texas, and Cis Perry, sheriff of Chaves

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County, New Mexico, surprised and captured him without a fight.

Cook denied involvment in many of the crimes with which he was charged, but was convicted of robbing the Wells, Fargo express at Red Fork on July 18, 1894. In February 1895, Cook was sentenced to forty-five years in the Albany Penitentiary in New York. He died there of tuberculosis on February 15, 1900. The only full-length study of Cook is Lonnie E. Underhill's *Outlaws in the Indian Territory: The Bill Cook Gang, 1894–1895*, published in 1985.

Spur Fashion

A couple of friends engaged in a lively discussion have been "spurred" to ask whether cowboys wore both spurs—or only one—while working. Floyd W. Upton, 1485 Mulberry Avenue, Atwater, California 95301, said a friend of his claims that working cowboys only wore one: those mounting a horse from the left wore one on the right boot, those mounting from the right wore it on the left. This was because many horses were not well-broken and the cowboy wanted to be in the saddle before a spur touched the animal. Mr. Upton wants to know who is correct.

I reviewed a number of paintings by cowboy artist Charles Russell, who not only knew horses but cowboys very well. Several paintings of cowboys at work show them wearing both spurs. "Wild Horse Hunters" and "Cinch Ring" are two examples. The painting "Call of the Law" shows men with spurs on each boot. I think it is safe to say that working cowboys wore both spurs as a matter of course.

If you have a question, send it to Chuck Parsons, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076. Please keep questions brief. Sign your full name and address, including zip code. Names and addresses will be published if question is used. Space limitations may not permit us to use all questions.

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DENVER'S STRANGLER'S ROW

By ROBERT V. HUNT, JR.

Market Street in Denver, Colorado, is today a quiet, one-way thoroughfare lined by old buildings, parking lots, and warehouses, but barely one hundred years ago it flourished as one of the most notorious red-light districts in the West. A four-block-long version of Sodom and Gomorrah, it served as the location for dozens of saloons, gambling dens, and bawdy houses. Before the "Line" closed down permanently in 1915—during a wave of progressive reform—as many as 700 prostitutes at a time earned their livelihood on Market Street.

By the last decade of the nineteenth century, Denverites had for the most part learned to tolerate, if not accept, the wickedness of Market Street (earlier known as Holladay Street). But few citizens who retired the evening of September 2, 1894, could have anticipated the unfolding of what the *Denver Post* would bill as crimes "without parallel in the. . . history of the state." For a while, at least, Market Street rivaled the famous Whitechapel District of London as the scene of sex-related serial murders.

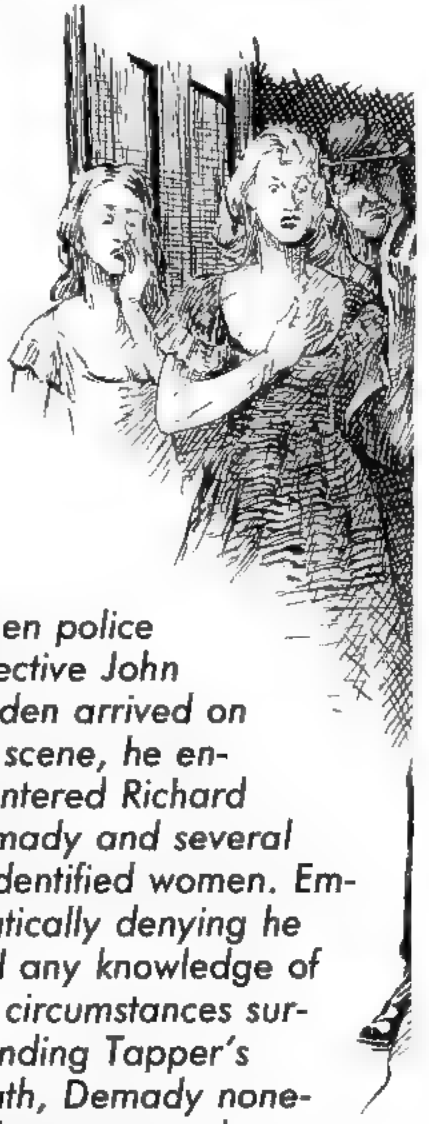
JOHN BORGATTI, an employee of the Casa Blanca Saloon (notorious as the headquarters of Denver's white slavery masters), arrived on the steps of a one-story crib at 1911 Market Street the morning of September 3, 1894, with the intent of collecting a grocery debt. Receiving no response to his knock, Borgatti opened the front door and stepped into the small front room normally occupied by Lena Tapper, a buxom, German-born prostitute in her late thirties. Tapper shared the house with Richard Demady, a leader of the French-dominated society of panderers known as the *macquereaux*. The "macs," as they were known on Market Street, existed as a tightly-knit, oath-bound organization bent upon dominating the vice trade in the tenderloin. As an early example of organized crime, the *macquereaux* enforced their edicts through a combination of intimidation and bribery; rumor had it that they had friends in high political places. The panderers themselves preferred to be known by the high-faluting name of *Les Chevaliers D'Amour*, roughly translated as "Gentlemen of Love."

Borgatti found himself staring at the mutilated body of a dead woman lying sprawled across a bed. As a coroner's jury later disclosed, Lena Tapper had been beaten senseless with a blunt instrument and then strangled with an article of her own clothing. Tapper's "well-developed" body was nude except for a scanty nightgown. Her face had been disfigured by blows forceful enough to dislodge an eye. Underneath a blood-soiled pillow that partially covered her face, the victim's purple tongue protruded between blood-encrusted lips. The left side of Tapper's body displayed severe bruises. From the damage done to her person, and the blood-splattered floor and walls, it was evident that a terrible struggle had preceded "Dutch" Lena's death.

When police detective John Leyden arrived on the scene, he encountered Richard Demady and several unidentified women. Emphatically denying he had any knowledge of the circumstances surrounding Tapper's death, Demady nonetheless presented a "horrible appearance," his face and head covered by perspiration, and his eyes "wild-looking." Despite the fact that three dogs lived in the house, Demady insisted he had heard nothing out of the ordinary during the night.

In a statement to police, Demady said he had last seen Lena alive about 1:30 a.m., having earlier discovered that she had an "all-night" customer. Awakening about 8:45 a.m., Demady said he went grocery shopping and returned to the house about an hour later. Upon hearing the music from a band participating in the Labor Day parade, he said he walked several blocks to Seventeenth and Champa streets to observe the festivities. Back home at about 11:45 a.m., Demady said he walked into Lena's room and attempted to rouse her, but found that she was dead. He then raced to his brother's house to tell him the bad news.

In spite of Demady's protests of innocence (although hardpressed to explain why he had not notified the police after finding the body), he was arrested along with his brother Edmond Demady, and his sister, Diana Demady, and charged with murder. Charges against the brother and sister were soon dropped, but Richard Demady found



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himself incarcerated in the county jail in lieu of a $5,000 bond. He immediately hired Edgar Caypless, a prominent Denver attorney, as counsel.

In an era before modern laboratory techniques were widely available to police departments, few recognized the importance of keeping crime scenes inviolate until all the evidence had been collected. In this case, Lena Tapper's room almost immediately filled with various police officials, not to mention sundry hangers-on and curious persons. Some of those present may have had more sinister motives: the removal of incriminating evidence such as the revolver found next to the victim's bed. Authorities learned that Demady owned a weapon, thanks to the discovery of several letters written to Demady by a shapely, blonde prostitute named Laura Johnson, then residing in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Both the *Rocky Mountain News* and the *Denver Republican* published the potentially incriminating correspondence between Demady and Johnson. The Denver press openly speculated that Demady killed Tapper because the latter refused to gracefully exit so that Demady could replace her with the younger, more attractive Laura Johnson.

TO ADD credence to this scenario, a witness came forward to claim he had seen Demady choking Tapper the night of the crime. Jim Park, a laborer, said he was passing 1911 Market Street between 8:00 and 9:00 p.m. on September 3, when he heard a "racket" inside. Peering through the front window, he saw a man choking a woman whose face was covered with blood; in the midst of the struggle, the man violently shoved the woman into a back room. Park said he left at that point because he did not want "to become involved in a family affair." Later arrested as a material witness, Park refused to make an official statement regarding his observations.

Meanwhile, Police Chief Hamilton Armstrong voiced his belief that Demady killed Tapper in order to get her out of the way. Convinced that they had their man, the police dragged Demady down to the morgue and forced him to place his hand around the still

Illustrated by AL MARTIN NAPOLETANO

visible marks on the victim's arm. They appeared to match perfectly.

While many of the denizens of the tenderloin were anything but reticent to talk about the murder, others were plainly intimidated by the *macquereaux*. Some who had originally made incriminating statements to reporters, soon had a change of mind after being afflicted with a strangely contagious case of amnesia.

Six weeks passed and the inhabitants of Market Street returned to their normal routines. But on the morning of October 29, 1894, news flashed throughout the "row" that another prostitute had been found murdered in her bed. The latest victim was a French-born crib-dweller named Marie Contassot. A young woman of twenty-three, Contassot was found dead at 1925 Market Street—a short distance from the Tapper house—by her lover, an Italian-born policeman named Tony Saunders.

MARIE CONTASSOT and her sister, Eugenie, had come to the U.S. from Paris, France, about 1890. Both sisters worked as prostitutes and lived together with Eugenie Contassot's paramour, a Frenchman named Charles Challoup, until a few days before the murder. According to testimony later given by a neighbor, Challoup had caught Marie kissing Saunders. Fearing that a rival was about to move onto his turf, Challoup severely reprimanded Marie and threatened her with bodily harm if she had any more to do with Saunders. Contassot and Saunders nonetheless moved in together two days before the murder.

Saunders, who readily admitted to being on the premises at the time of the murder, was an obvious suspect. He vehemently insisted upon his innocence, however, offering the police a detailed account of the evening's events. Saunders said he came home about eight o'clock the night of October 28 and was met by Marie, who begged him not to go back out. He agreed to stay, and went upstairs where he fell asleep while reading a newspaper.

Awakening shortly before 3:00 a.m., he noticed that all was quiet both in the house and on the street below. He went downstairs and observed that the front door was shut and the window shades pulled down. The door to Marie's room was closed, but he could see the reflection of a light shining underneath. Opening the door, Saunders saw Marie sprawled across the bed with her face turned toward the wall; her feet hung over the side of the bed and she was clad in a nightgown. Saunders touched her bare feet and found them ice cold. From the position of her head—twisted and partially covered by a pillow—and the blood smeared on her face, he realized that she was dead. He immediately ran out the front door, blowing his police whistle to alert authorities.

Once on the scene, investigators found a piece of sash cord about a foot long on top of the counterpane. The girl's room appeared to be in order, although the police noticed that someone apparently had tried to tamper with the lock of a large trunk. Crumpled next to the bed—as if hastily removed—was a pair of stockings. Doctor John Wheeler, the police surgeon, arrived and proceeded to examine the body of the dead girl. Removing the blood-stained pillow from about her head, and a towel that was crammed into her mouth, Wheeler found her face "swollen and purpled." One eye was blackened and her protruding tongue was "nearly bitten in two." The neck lay twisted at an unnatural angle, and the region of the windpipe indicated severe trauma.

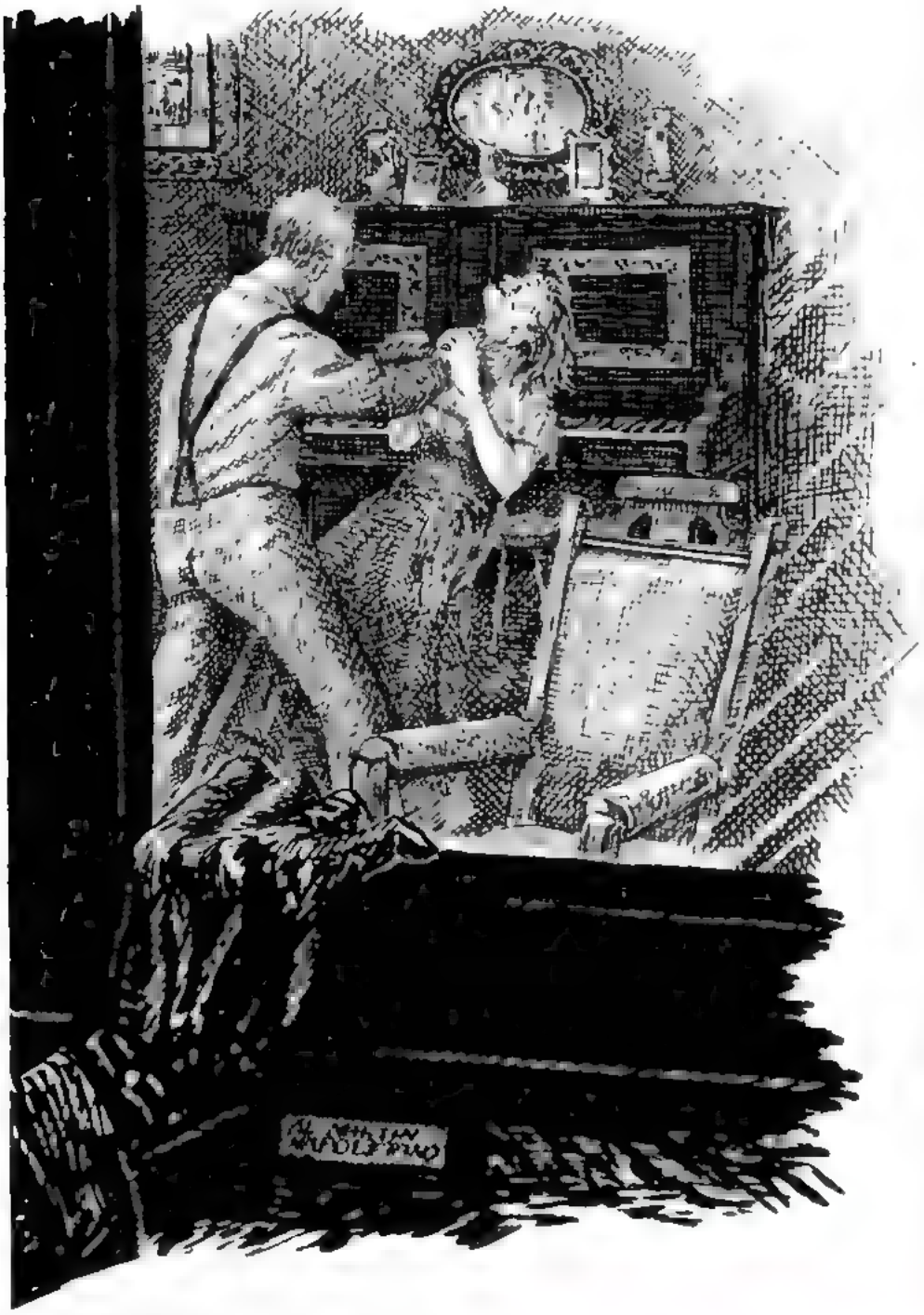
A squad of policemen and sheriff's deputies descended upon Market Street and, true to form, began arresting every

likely looking "suspect." One such, a Telluride, Colorado, miner named John Callaghan, had had the misfortune to contact the police the night before the murder to complain that Contassot had stolen $100 from him. After an officer accompanied him to her crib, Callaghan changed his mind and declined to press charges. He admitted that he might have lost the money in another whorehouse. Several policemen reported they had seen Callaghan standing on the sidewalk only four doors from the Contassot abode about 9:30 the evening of the murder.

Another suspect picked up in the "drag-net" was Emil Tayman—identified as Contassot's cook. Police were puzzled by Tayman's statement that he normally spent the night at 1925 Market Street but happened to be elsewhere on the night of the murder. It was later learned that Tayman spent the evening with a prostitute next door at 1927 Market Street, the top story of which was separated from Contassot's house by only a flimsy door secured by an even more flimsy lock.

Also arrested and subjected to the tender persuasion of the police "sweat box" was a *macquereau* named Daniel Picot. Allegedly, he had imported three of his sisters to work in his bagnio in the tenderloin. One sister was said to be only thirteen years old, a situation that had been communicated to the Colorado Humane Society, which quickly removed the girl from the unsavory environment of Market Street. According to the rumors, Picot suspected Marie Contassot of reporting the girl's presence to the authorities.

Charles Challoup, who along with



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Richard Demady became a prime suspect in the Contassot murder, ranked as a member in good standing of the French Society. Allegedly, he forced Marie to do most of the "work," while he lived the good life with Eugenie and showered her with gifts and attention. According to widely circulated reports, Challoup and the Contassot sisters had within the past two years made a trip to France, where they invested between $20,000 and $25,000 in Paris real estate. With that tidy nest egg, so it went, Challoup and Eugenie planned to settle down to a life of leisure as man and wife. But because Marie stood in the way of their plans, she had to be eliminated.

FOLLOWING HIS latest arrest, Richard Demady secured his release from jail on the recognizance of his attorney. Charles Challoup regained his freedom thanks to a bond posted by Joseph Biancullo—owner of the Casa Blanca Saloon—and attorney Edgar Caypless. Frustrated by his inability to keep his two prime suspects in jail, Chief Armstrong reiterated his belief that the deaths of Tapper and Contassot could be laid at the feet of the French Society. He declared, "I'll drive out every macq

on Market Street or I'll bust the Police Department."

Less than a week after her death, Dr. Hugh L. Taylor, a former police surgeon, made public the results of the autopsy of Marie Contassot. To no one's surprise, he announced that the victim died by strangulation at the hands of a person or persons unknown. He also theorized that she might have been chloroformed or otherwise drugged before being strangled.

Distraught by the murder of her sister, and perhaps knowing more about her death than she would ever be able to reveal, Eugenie Contassot was determined that Marie would have a first-class funeral. The *Denver Republican* described the service as "a most gorgeous affair," costing in excess of $800. Tony Saunders, Charles Challoup, and Eugenie all attended the service. They were joined by a large contingent of women from Market Street, who generously contributed impressive floral arrangements. Along with the prostitutes, the paper recorded the presence of a "California clique of female pickpockets."

The second strangulation reinforced the sense of dread permeating the parlors and cribs of Market Street. Instead of flaunting their wares as they normally did, prostitutes huddled in groups and cowered in doorways, fearful that the next customer might be "Jack the Strangler," as the women began to call the unknown murderer.

Only the most hardened individuals could remain impervious to the danger after an incident involving a crib-dweller named Jenny Foster, who lived directly across the street from Marie Contassot's house.

AS LATER TOLD to reporters, Foster and another woman were sitting in her front room about 9:30 p.m. on October 30, when a short, dark-featured man with a disfigured ear entered. No sooner had the man given the other woman a dollar bribe to leave than he turned to Foster and muttered, "That girl across the street died. This is how she was killed." With that he grabbed Foster by the throat and began to choke her. Fortunately, the other woman was yet within hearing range and immediately came to the rescue, causing the assailant to utter an oath and flee out the door. Foster declined to report the attack to the police.

Then, on the evening of November 2, Detectives Ed Carberry and Glenn Duffield responded to the screams of a young woman at 2140 Market Street. Fleeing to escape her attacker, the woman crashed through the glass partition of her front door. When the detectives arrived, the terrified woman was "covered with blood and there were finger marks on her throat." The woman said she had been assaulted and robbed by a man who attempted to strangle her. Bystanders grabbed the suspect, later identified as A.D. Gooch, a teamster from Black Hawk, Colorado. Gooch admitted attacking the woman, but insisted that "she had fallen and hurt herself." Police viewed Gooch as a drunken bully, but too crude to be "the strangler."

In the interim, Richard Demady was once again arrested—this time on the old charge of murdering Lena Tapper. But he also became a suspect in the Oyama murder. On the evening of November 13, a policeman saw Demady, accompanied by a big dog, standing near the alley behind Oyama's residence.

At this stage, some police officers speculated that the *macquereaux* were too smart to do the actual killings themselves; rather, the murderer was most likely a "professional strangler" of the type employed by the "macs" in France and elsewhere to rid themselves of persons considered a threat to the organization. Others were convinced that Richard Demady was the arch-villain responsible for the evil deeds. Credence was given to this theory by Tony Saunders' statement that Demady had asked Marie Contassot to work for him but had been rebuffed. Reportedly, Demady did not take the rejection lightly and told her that she would work for him or not remain in Denver.

While officials speculated and "suspicious" characters cooled their heels in jail, the strangler struck again. On the morning of November 13, 1894, Imi Oyama, a Japanese man living at

1959 Market Street, awakened and walked next door to 1957 Market Street, the home of his mistress, a twenty-four-year-old Japanese prostitute named Kiku Oyama. Entering her room, he stumbled upon the young woman's nearly naked form lying twisted at an awkward angle on the blood-spattered counterpane. A towel was wrapped tightly around her neck. Detective Carberry responded to Imi Oyama's cries for help and discovered that the woman still had a faint pulse. The young woman expired as Carberry and Oyama stood by helplessly. Within minutes the police surgeon arrived and pronounced Kiku Oyama dead, probably from strangulation. As he examined the body, the surgeon noted that finger marks were visible on the victim's discolored neck.

Imi Oyama told police he last saw

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Kiku at eight o'clock the previous evening, after which he returned to his own house. At 1:15 a.m., he said, he entered her house by the back door, which stood open. After discovering the body, he sounded the alarm and returned to administer first aid, which consisted of rubbing her skin and blowing water in her face.

At a loss for suspects, police arrested six Japanese, including Oyama, and a Chinese, and charged them with vagrancy, a catch-all charge used to jail troublemaking prostitutes and pimps. Within several hours all seven were bailed out by the same Joseph Bianuello who had posted bond for Richard Demady, Charles Challoup, and Eugenie Contassot. In another odd twist, police discovered that a crib-dweller named Mamie Sheehan had occupied the bottom story of 1959 Market Street until the day before the Oyama murder. According to neighbors, she left in a panic after a man attacked her in her room. She did not report the incident, but expressed the fear that the man might return at night and murder her.

BIZARRE theories about the strangulations began to circulate with ever greater frequency. A Denver physician speculated that the three women were victims of an erotomaniac. Others were convinced that the strangler was a religious fanatic or someone with a particular hatred of crib women. The more reflective types viewed the latest murder as a sinister attempt to throw the police off the scent by making it appear that a madman prowled the tenderloin.

Any eccentricity quickly attracted the attention of the amateur sleuths who populated Market Street. A tamale vendor said he saw a stranger with a false beard walking along the 1900 block of Market Street, peering at the house numbers; when he came to 1957, he stopped and wrote something in a notebook. Since then, according to the *Denver Republican*, "every wearer of a goatee or Vandyke beard has been boycotted on 'Strangler's row.'" To add to the excitement, several clairvoyants made conspicuous appearances in the area, making ominous predictions about future attacks by the stranger.

Meanwhile, the coroner's report was made public. Once again, the cause of

death was given as strangulation by an unknown party. Detective Carberry testified that he found Kiku Oyama lying unconscious and dressed only in underwear and stockings, "the latter pulled down below the ankles." The report offered one other bit of tantalizing information: the size of a thumb imprint on Oyama's neck indicated that the killer had an extraordinarily large thumbnail. Not surprisingly, big-thumbed men did not find a particularly warm welcome on the "row" for quite some time.

In the interim, Richard Demady was once again arrested—this time on the old charge of murdering Lena Tapper. But he also became a suspect in the Oyama murder. On the evening of November 13, a policeman observed Demady, accompanied by a big dog, standing near the alley at the rear of Oyama's residence.

SCARE NOW followed scare in the panic-stricken houses of the tenderloin. A madame named Lola Pennington, who lived at 2013 Market Street, told of a terrifying encounter on the night of November 14. She retired early in the evening, and due to fear of the strangler, had one of her girls sleep with her. About 3:00 a.m., she awakened to the sound of a creaking door. "Who is there?" she demanded. Silence. Then the sound of footsteps retreating down the hall. Too frightened to move for several minutes Pennington finally regained her composure and upon unlocking the door found that "the wooden panels of the door had been tampered with." Later investigation revealed that a knife or other sharp object had been used to try to cut the lock out of the door. As the *Denver Republican* somewhat understated, "...the sudden waking of the mistress probably saved a heap of trouble."

The latest murder was too much for many of the women, particularly the Asians, who moved out en masse. Perhaps significantly, none of the French Society women appear to have departed. Mattie Silks, the celebrated madame of the House of Mirrors at 1942 Market Street, attempted to calm the fears of her "hostesses" by installing bars over the upper story windows. Others formed mutual aid societies, complete with signals and whistles, and hired an ex-policeman to patrol the area.

DESPITE all the precautions, prostitutes continued to be attacked. On the evening of November 17, the tenderloin filled with the screams of a woman living at 1330 Twentieth Street. According to the account given by the victim, Marie Vendres (also spelled "Anders"), she was sitting at her window waiting for a customer when a man came in and, before she could speak, grabbed her by the throat. Forcing her knees between his, the attacker pulled out a stiletto as he wrestled her into the bedroom. Fortunately for Vendres, help arrived in the form of her "husband," who was in the back of the house and heard the commotion. After a brief struggle, the man of the house subdued the intruder. Described by the police as "half clad and...wildly excited," the assailant was identified as H. Moller, a thirty-six-year-old Italian-born stone-cutter.

Shortly thereafter, the police arrested a French-Canadian named Frank Roch as a suspect in the last two murders. Allegedly, Roch had at one time worked for the *macquereaux*. He had been ostracized by the French Society for some betrayal and, it was said, had vowed revenge. Roch was—if nothing else—one of the most unsavory characters arrested to date. Several years earlier while living in Leadville, Colorado, he had nearly killed another Frenchman with a pick. He was also wanted by Illinois authorities for attempted murder.

Despite exposure to the sweat-box and solitary confinement, Roch steadfastly refused to cooperate with the police, "maintaining a sullen silence" throughout his interrogations. Notwithstanding the testimony of a gambler who swore that he saw Roch exiting the

alley behind the Oyama residence on the night of the murder, Roch was released from jail on November 19. Despite the inability of the police to link either Moller or Roch directly with the murders, Chief Armstrong remained convinced that the murderer was a professional in the pay of the *macquereaux*.

Other women on Market Street continued to be victimized, and several more suspects were arrested, but when all was said and done, the only suspect indicted and tried for murder was Richard Demady. His years as a pimp had made him a relatively rich man, and as such he commanded the best legal minds in Colorado. Of his three defense lawyers, two were former judges.

Despite the evidence presented by the prosecution—including the testimony of two eyewitnesses—the defense had little trouble discrediting the key prosecution witnesses. The defense repeatedly caught them contradicting themselves on crucial points. It also exposed the witnesses against Demady as primarily underworld characters with scant reputations for veracity and often abysmal ignorance of the most elementary details related to the Tapper murder. After the fifth ballot on May 9, 1895, the twelve-man jury found Richard Demady not guilty of the murder of Lena Tapper. Demady rapidly vanished from the historical stage.

DISCOURAGED that they had failed to identify and convict their prime suspect, the police made one last effort to nab the strangler when they arrested two "vagabond Frenchmen," named Victor Monchereaux and Alphonse Lamar (or "Lemaire"), and charged them with the murder of Marie Contassot. Monchereaux was described as having "abnormally big hands," and, according to a statement made by a decidedly inebriated Lamar, not only killed Contassot, but attempted to strangle another woman as well. Nothing in the way of hard evidence could be produced, and they, too, vanished from the scene after serving ninety days for vagrancy.

Nine years passed and the murders gradually faded from public memory. But on July 5, 1903, Mabel Brown, an attractive, twenty-year-old crib-dweller, became the fourth Market Street prostitute to die at the hands of a strangler. Her body, clad in a "pink kimono," was discovered about midnight in the bedroom of her house at 1931 Market Street. Like the other three victims, she lived—and died—on the west side of the 1900 block of Market Street. She was found stretched across her bed, her hands tied with suspenders, a gag stuffed into her mouth, and finger marks around her neck.

Although Brown was apparently in the house alone, there were several similarities with the 1894 murders. As with the other victims, Brown's paramour was nearby when she was murdered. A bartender named Harry Challis, he had reportedly dispatched a friend to meet Brown and escort her back to the house she shared with him at Twenty-second and California streets. Later investigation revealed that Challis was one of the first on the scene of the crime, but fled the premises and failed to notify the police until urged to do so by his employer. When arrested, Challis had blood and saliva stains on his shirt cuff; he explained that he had been playing with an injured dog at his saloon—a fact that could never be substantiated.

Although the attention of the police focused primarily on Challis and a former lover of Brown's, some officers suspected that Challis was no more than a patsy for the *macquereaux*, who yet remained a force to be reckoned with on Market Street. According to one theory bandied about, Brown had earned the enmity of the French Society because of an argument with a French prostitute over a dog. (Brown kept a "vicious dog" for protection, but the dog mysteriously vanished several days before her death.) The *Denver Times* noted that "it is considered likely that the French women hired an assassin to kill the American girl." Others theorized that Brown had somehow learned details of the 1894 murders and thus had to be eliminated.

The coroner's report found that Mabel Brown was strangled by an unknown assailant. At the inquest, Challis testified that on one occasion he saw a Frenchman slap Brown. He also said that two weeks prior to her death, Brown told him that a Frenchman visited her with a "proposition" to work for him. According to Challis, Brown rejected the offer and was rewarded with a blow to the throat and the threat of further reprisals.

Harry Challis appeared for a preliminary hearing before a magistrate court on July 21, 1903. Despite contradictory testimony, the judge determined that there was insufficient evidence to bind him over for trial. Thus the charges were dropped against Harry Challis, and the murder of Mabel Brown was filed among the unsolved cases in the Denver Police Department.

At a loss for suspects, police arrested six Japanese and a Chinese, and charged them with vagrancy, a catch-all charge used to jail troublemaking prostitutes and pimps. Within hours all seven were bailed out by the same Joseph Bianuello who had posted bond for Richard Demady, Charles Challoup, and Eugenie Contassot.

NOW, ALMOST 100 years after the Market Street murders, the question remains, who murdered the four prostitutes? Were the other attacks on prostitutes random occurrences or part of some conspiracy to drive out the competition? The one common thread that connected the murders was the menacing presence of the *macquereaux*. Two of the victims, Tapper and Contassot, had direct connections with the French Society, and we know that Brown had several run-ins with the French Society. Only Oyama apparently had no direct dealings with them.

Rather than showing any alarm at the murders, the *macquereaux* went out of their way to silence anyone who had the slightest knowledge about them. They also had a highly effective intelligence network on Market Street and were often able to anticipate the actions of the police, so it is hard to believe that they had no involvement in the crimes. Discovering the motives for the killings is more difficult. Disloyalty? Competition? Greed? All we really know is that four prostitutes died at the hands of a strangler during the heyday of Denver's famous Line, and many others were attacked.

The victims all are buried fairly close together at Denver's pioneer Riverside Cemetery. Of the four, only Marie Contassot received a headstone—and an impressive one at that. An angel—now with broken arms—stands atop a pedestal over her grave. Engraved in French are the words expressing the "regret" of her sister and friends. That sentiment summarizes the fate of all the victims.

ROCK CREEK

Wyoming Cattle Town

By MURRAY L. CARROLL

George A. Crofutt's *New Overland Tourist's Guide* for 1882 described Rock Creek as "a small eating station, on a small creek of the same name. Trains from the east stop for supper, from the west for breakfast, 30 minutes are allowed for that purpose, which is ample time as the meals served are not the best on the road; however, the fossiles [sic] are *k-urious*."

This once-famous Wyoming cowtown is not on any modern map of Wyoming, and you won't find it listed in any postal directories or atlases, but a hundred years ago, in spite of Crofutt's opinion, it was as lively a town as there was in the West.

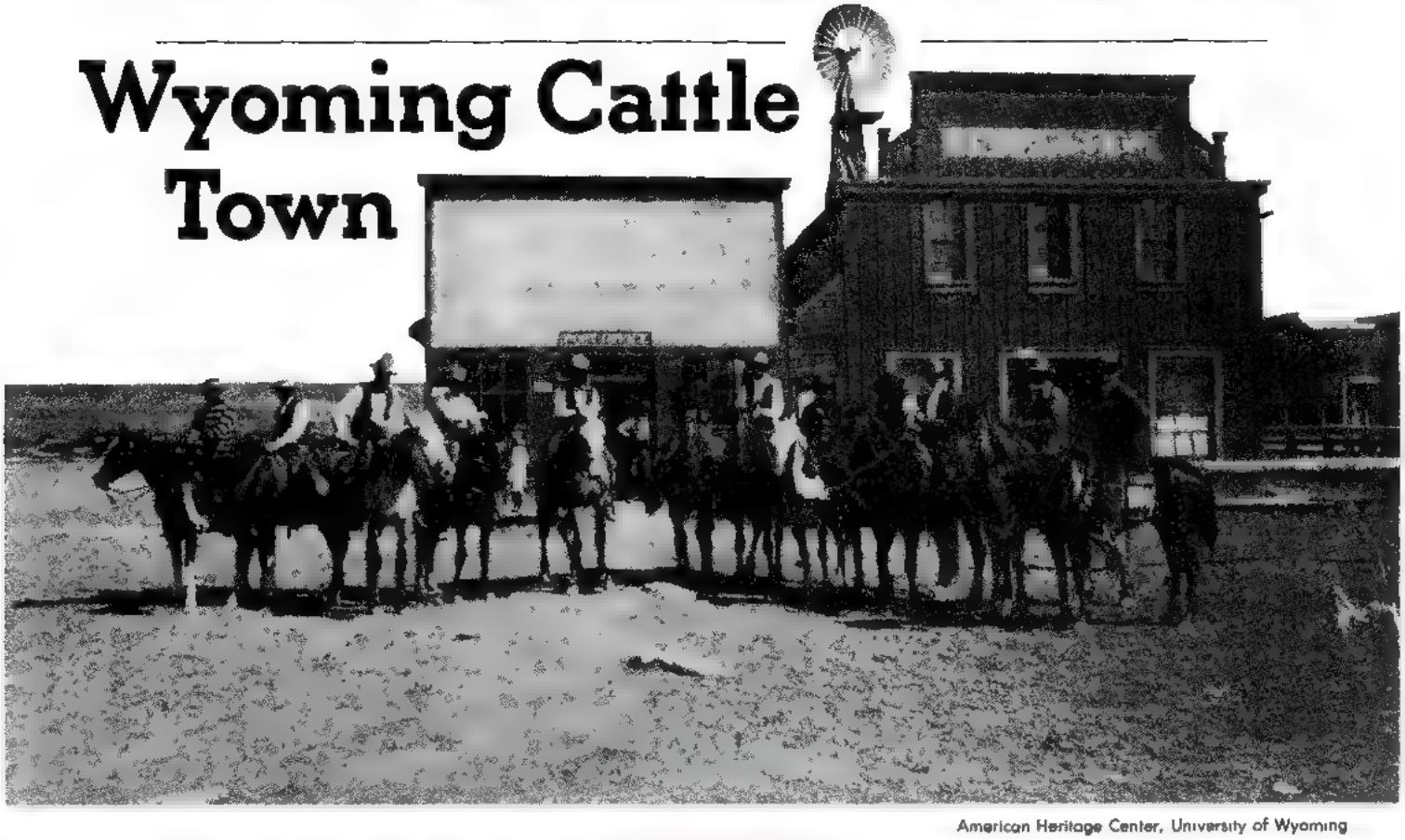
The town was not only important in the authentic West, but in the fictional West as well. Like many real pioneers, Miss Molly Wood, the schoolteacher in Owen Wister's *The Virginian*, left the train at Rock Creek and took the stage north into the sagebrush wilderness.

Rock Creek began as a section station on the Union Pacific Railroad. However, the town, at least in this location, was not on the originally planned route for the railroad. In fact, it grew from a dispute between Gen. Grenville Dodge, the Union Pacific's chief engineer, and contractors over the route Dodge had mapped out west of Cheyenne.

The dispute began in the fall of 1867 over the section from Laramie to the Rattlesnake Hills. The original survey called for some difficult grading and while Dodge was in Salt Lake City, Col. Silas Seymour, the consulting engineer, ordered the line dropped into the valleys of Rock Creek and the Medicine Bow River. This added twenty miles to the track and started a rumor that the real reason for the change was to get a $48,000 per mile federal subsidy and additional land grants. Even with eighty-five-foot-deep Cannonball Cut in this new route, the amount of grading was half what Dodge's plan required. While reducing building time and costs, this route earned $900,000 for the company.

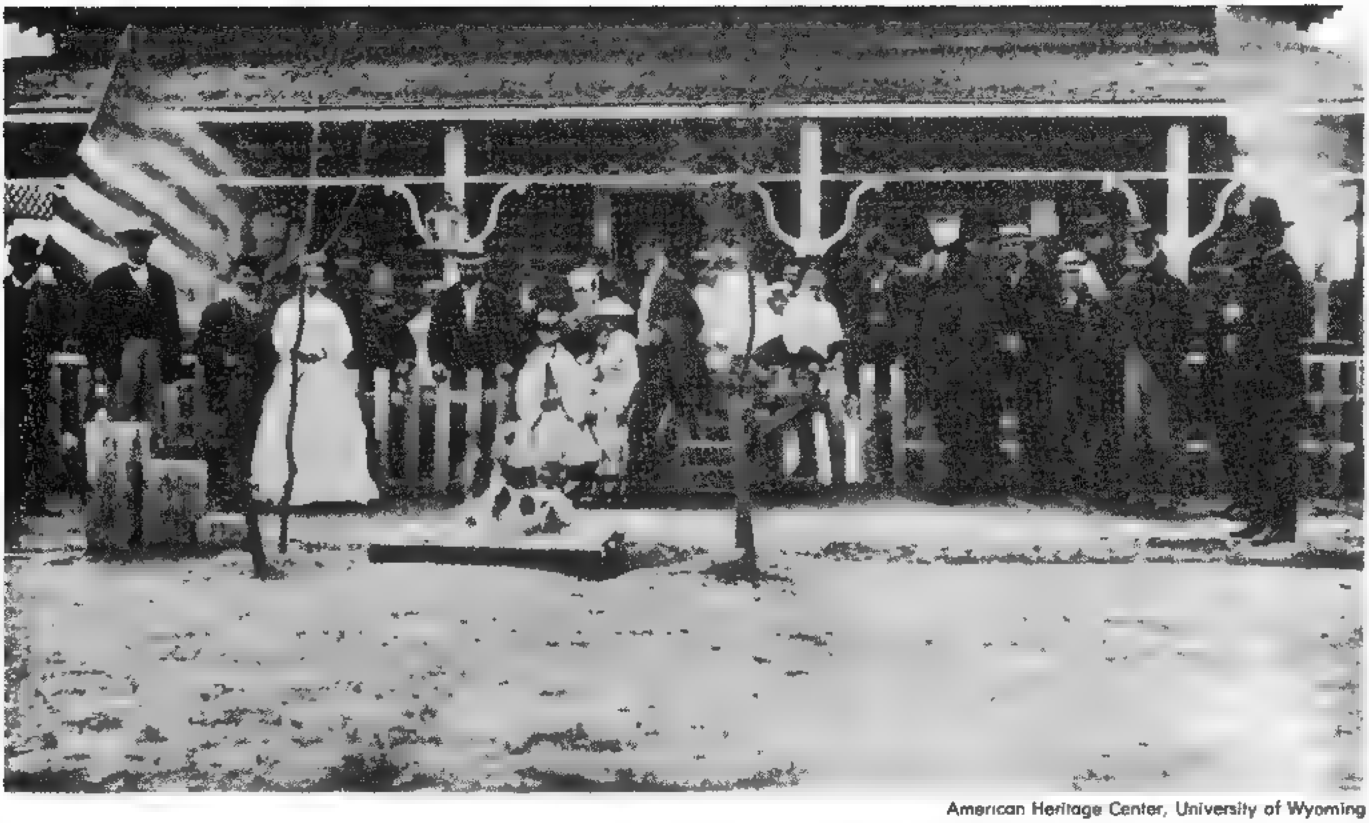
The incident also created a power struggle between Dodge and Dr. Thomas C. Durant, vice-president of the Union Pacific. Durant favored Seymour's quick fix over Dodge's more sound, long-term plan, and wanted to replace Dodge with Seymour.

The dispute was settled in a meeting at Fort Sanders, Wyoming, on July 26, 1868, in what was one of the most notable gatherings of Civil War heroes since the end of the war. Generals Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, Philip H. Sheridan, John Gibbon, William S. Harney, August V. Kautz, Joseph H. Potter, Frederick T. Dent, Lewis C. Hunt, and Adam J. Slemmer, met with Dodge, Durant, and Sidney M. Dillon of the Union Pacific. Grant decided the new route would be used since most of the grading was complete. He also decided that Dodge would remain as chief engineer and his route would be followed for the remainder of the line. Thus the hero of the Civil War—the man who would be elected president in less



American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

Cowboys in front of the Rock Creek store, post office, and hotel about 1890.



American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

Showdown at Fort Sanders, Wyoming, July 26, 1868. Left to right, General Dodge, Sidney Dillon, General Sheridan, Mrs. Dent, General Gibbon, Mrs. Gibbon, General Grant, Frederick Dent, General Sherman, General Harney (in top hat), Dr. Durant, and Gen. Joseph Potter.

Rock Creek began as a section station on the Union Pacific Railroad. However, the town was not on the originally planned route for the railroad. In fact, it grew from a dispute between Gen. Grenville Dodge, the Union Pacific's chief engineer, and contractors over the route Dodge had mapped out west of Cheyenne.

than four months—decided the location of Rock Creek.

Engineers grading into the Rock Creek Valley found an eight-foot-thick vein of bituminous coal. This was the first large coal deposit found close to the railroad. It meant that locomotives would not have to depend on expensive and unsatisfactory pine-wood fuel, and that the railroad might make money selling the coal, or the coal land in the land grant.

As the railroad pushed past Rock Creek, workers left behind a typical section town. The railroad ran close to Rock Creek, so a diversion dam was built and an intake pipe run into the creek. A steam pump drew water from the creek into a storage tank for watering locomotives. The pump and boiler occupied one end of a pump house, while the pump-tender's quarters occupied the rest. There was a small station with a platform that served both passengers and freight. At the far west end of the little settlement stood a two-story section house to shelter the section workers assigned to the station.

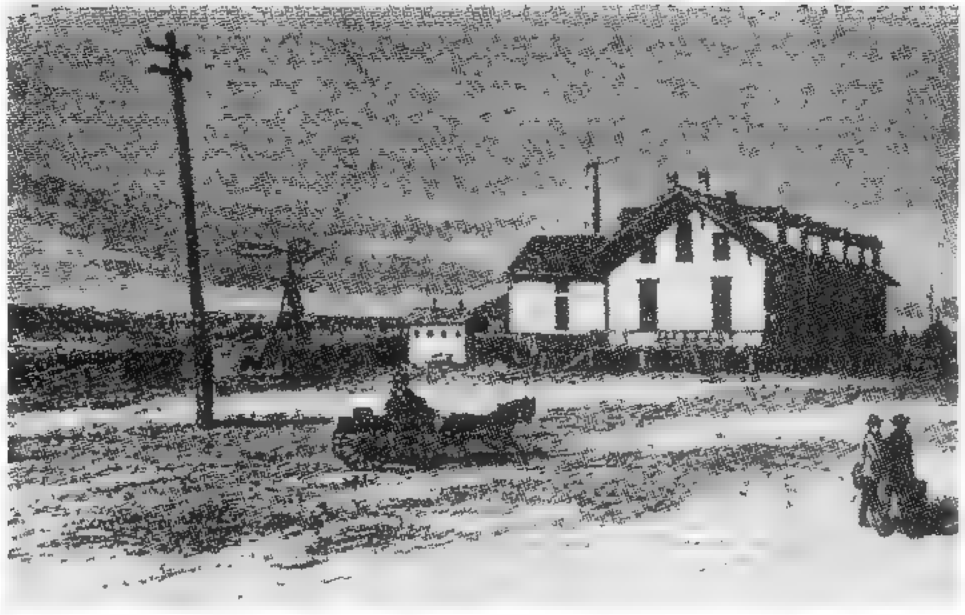
To the west of the town were the Medicine Bow Mountains, most notably the forbidding and often cloud-covered peak of Elk Mountain. The Laramie Mountains, then called the Black Hills, circled the town to the east and north, with Laramie Peak almost directly northeast. Behind stood Como Ridge, made famous in 1870 when Dr. O C. Marsh discovered huge beds of dinosaur bones. About eighty-five miles due north, over the Laramie Mountains, was Fort Fetterman, the Platte River, and Indian country. Not that there weren't plenty of Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe to be found in the intervening eighty-five miles; Indian scares were common, and in the early summer of 1876, during the Sioux campaign, Indians stole 160 horses from three ranches near town.

Few people other than railroaders lived in Rock Creek. Some professional hunters brought their game down for shipping, a few prospectors tried their luck in the surrounding mountains, and a few ranchers moved in between the town and the old Rock Creek station on the Overland Trail twenty-five miles upstream. In the early summer, wood contractors brought their ties and firewood to town for shipment.

Charlie Bussard built a tie boom at Rock Creek; on the June high water in 1872, he floated 70,000 ties down the creek and pulled them out at the town. While men pulled the ties from the water, stacked, and loaded them for shipment, Rock Creek teemed with workers and mule teams. A temporary tent town accommodated the transient crew.

When tie season was over, the regular occupants settled back into their routine railroaders' lives. Only a visit from an occasional hunter or an Indian scare broke the monotony. Now and then a cavalry patrol from Fort Fetterman or Fort Sanders stopped by, but the important town was Medicine Bow, about twelve miles west. There the trail north to Fort Fetterman started, and it was

Wyoming Division of Parks and Cultural Resources



Left: Gov. John M. Thayer, hero of Shiloh and Fort Donelson, with his sons operated freight wagons, a store, a hotel, and restaurant in Rock Creek after his term as territorial governor of Wyoming. Thayer was elected Governor of Nebraska in 1886. Right: Governor

from Medicine Bow that the army shipped all its supplies. Besides the railroad buildings and the quartermaster warehouse, Medicine Bow had a regular saloon with a pool table, a hotel, and a store. A troop of cavalry was stationed there each summer to escort the bull trains of army supplies to the north.

However, in 1877 a substantial change occurred. During the Centennial Campaign against the Sioux the previous summer, the military road between Medicine Bow and Fort Fetterman was not adequate to meet Gen. George Crook's logistical needs. In May 1877, a party of soldiers from the Fourth Infantry and the Third Cavalry from Fort Sanders laid out a new route from Rock Creek to Fort Fetterman. The new road was only two miles shorter, but it eliminated four river crossings and used a better pass through the Laramie Mountains. It was both faster and safer than the Medicine Bow road and was open year-round, while the Medicine Bow road was closed from November until June.

The first train of military supplies left Rock Creek on June 13. In August, troops from the Second Cavalry at Fort Sanders were detailed to build a bridge across Rock Creek, a quartermaster warehouse, and a railroad siding. Gov. John M. Thayer and his sons, Herbert and C.D., started a large freighting operation out of Rock Creek, and Heck

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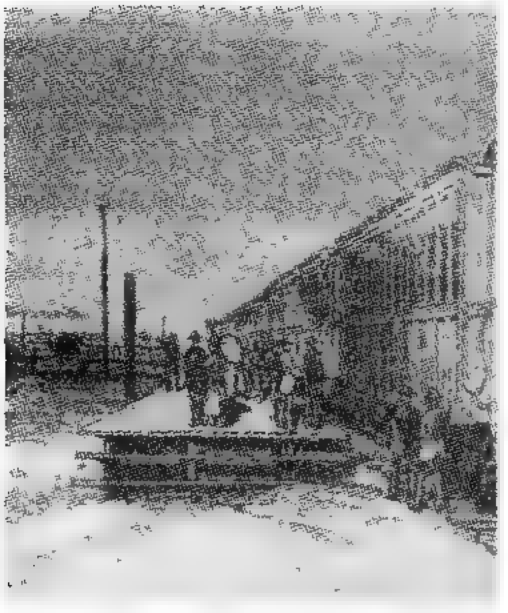
Rock Creek about 1880. The bridge in the center was built by Second Cavalry troops from Fort Sanders.

Author's Collection



Thayer's hotel at Rock Creek was a meal stop for Union Pacific passengers.

Francis Seely Webb Collection, Casper Community College

Matthew Campbell, his wife Fanny, and their son were the only black residents of Rock Creek

Reel, a freighter in Wyoming Territory, put ten bull teams on the Rock Creek-Fort Fetterman route to carry military supplies.

The final defeat of the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes in the fall and winter of 1876 opened the area from the North Platte River to the Yellowstone River for settlement. The Rock Creek route joined the old Bozeman Trail at Fort Fetterman, becoming the first link of a four-hundred-mile road extending from the Union Pacific north to Terry's Landing, Montana.

By 1878 the open-range cattle industry in Wyoming and southeastern Montana was growing rapidly and big companies, many with British backing, were moving on to the range. Cheyenne was the business and social capital of the industry, but Rock Creek was where the supplies for the ranches were transferred from the railroad to the freight wagons, and where the cattle were brought for shipment. With the ranches, the town grew. The Thayers added a general store and hotel to their operation. The town boasted three saloons and two hotels. William Baker opened a restaurant, Harry Holloway started a blacksmith shop, and "Uncle Matt" Campfield, a large black man who weighed over 300 pounds and had lost both legs below the knees, opened a barbershop. His wife, "Aunt Fanny," baked the pies and cakes for Baker's restaurant.

With the businesses came homes and families. A school was opened in a log room next to the quartermaster warehouse. Since the town was two students shy of the number required for a school, two young cowboys were sent by their employers to make up the difference. The school term ran from the end of fall roundup to the beginning of spring branding. Nellie Quackenbush, the school's first teacher, wrote a friend that the school, "serves as a bunkhouse for the soldiers passing through, and many a morning I have to hurry down to erase the blackboard and carry out the empty beer bottles before the children come."

During the busy season, 175 to 200 freight outfits operated out of the town. Each had four to eight yoke of oxen and pulled two or three wagons. The government and some freighters used mules, with six teams pulling two wagons or ten teams pulling three. The standard freight rate was one-cent per pound per mile. Most of the freighters were married and lived with their families in Rock Creek. An exception was Alferd Packer, the "Colorado Cannibal," who worked one season as a freighter using the alias John Schwartz.

T.S. Garrett was one freighter who decided to settle in Rock Creek permanently. In 1884 he sold his freight outfit, bought the Wyoming House Hotel, and married Mary A. Banner, a young English girl. Mary took to the frontier life with zest. She was an expert horsewoman who owned and raced her own horses. One day Jack Hill, a gunman noted for giving a man the first shot and then killing him, was shooting bottles off the fence behind the hotel. Just as he was about to shoot, the bottles started breaking. He spun around, and there stood a smiling Mary, a smoking six-shooter in her hand. One day while on a hunting party, an Englishman questioning her ability threw his new Stetson into the air and challenged Mary to hit it. To his consternation, the hat landed on the ground, filled with holes from two barrels of birdshot. A Montana rancher unloaded five blooded horses one morning and bragged that they could beat any horse in the country. Mary, riding her favorite mare, took them on one at a time over a 400-yard course and beat all five. As there was no hospital or doctor in Rock Creek, Mary nursed many a hurt cowpuncher back to health in the Wyoming House.

The road out of the valley contained Bentonite clay, which Indians used for soap and freighters used for axle grease. After the spring thaw, a common sport among freighters was to bet on which wagon could make it to the top of the hill without getting stuck and having to double-team to the top.

On August 21, 1882, a professional hunter named Gillan shot and killed Robert Aiken, a clerk in C.E. Clay's store. Aiken said something that provoked Gillan, who left the store, then returned with his .40 Sharps rifle. He said, "the Irish agin the world" several times, then shot Aiken through the head.

Stage coaches ran each way between Rock Creek and Fort Fetterman on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The "coaches" were two-horse, covered spring wagons and the fare was $10 each way. In the spring of 1879, the Patrick Brothers, who operated stage lines all over the West, took over the Rock Creek line and renamed it the Rock Creek, Fort Custer and Etcheta Stage Line. They extended the route to Junction City and Etcheta, Montana, a total distance of 404 miles. Patrick Brothers replaced the spring wagons with Concord coaches, and scheduled daily departures each way. The fare was

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$55 to Junction City or Etcheta, and $35 to Fort McKinney or the new town of Buffalo, Wyoming. The new line got the U.S. mail contract, worth $80,000 annually, and carried express as well.

Moreton Frewen, Winston Churchill's uncle and founder of the Powder River Cattle Company, did not want his many notable guests to suffer the discomforts and indignities of a public coach. Instead he maintained a Tally-ho in Rock Creek with regular relays of horses between there and "Frewen's Castle" on the Powder River, 190 miles to the north. All the furnishings for his house, including the staircase and woodwork imported from England, were shipped by wagon from Rock Creek.

When the army abandoned Fort Fetterman in 1882, Rock Creek hardly noticed the decrease in freight business. Supplies still flowed to Fort McKinney near Buffalo, and settlers quickly occupied the abandoned buildings of the fort, creating the town of Fetterman—the "Drybones" of Owen Wister's stories.

Cattle shipping now became more important than freighting. Beginning in 1883, from August to November a hundred carloads of cattle a day left the Rock Creek yards. In the fall of 1885, the Swan Land and Cattle Company held a thousand head of steers at Rock Creek for six days waiting for the market to go up. Rufe Rhodes, Swan's foreman, finally received a telegram reading, "Beef steers now bringing 3 cents ship at once."

Buildings at old Rock Creek before they were burned by vandals in the mid-1970s.

Dave West, a cowboy for John Connor's TL ranch, said he had seen as many as 15,000 steers waiting to be shipped out of Rock Creek at one time, with four of five chuck wagons set up and fifteen to twenty riders with each outfit. Cattle brought in from the Sweetwater country took two weeks to drive to Rock Creek. From the Bighorn Basin and Montana, it could take twice that long. Some cattle were brought from as far away as Idaho and eastern Oregon. The cattle were held on the range to fatten, then shipped. In the mid-1880s, Rock Creek ranked as the second largest freight shipping and receiving station on the Union Pacific Railroad.

Not all the cattle passing through the Rock Creek yards were on their way to market. In 1885, rather than drive cattle up from Texas to stock their nearby ranges, the Swan company shipped in 11,500 head of steers to Rock Creek. In 1886, the Niobrara Cattle Company shipped twenty-nine carloads from Texas and New Mexico to stock its Montana ranges.

Rock Creek had its shoot-outs and outlaws too. A gang of road agents plagued the stage line and the outlaws seemed to have good information about when valuable shipments would be

Sayles' bull train, a freighting outfit working between Rock Creek and Buffalo in 1884.

Dr D.L. Blackstone Photo

moved. A break came in December 1878. The gang planned a bold double robbery right in Rock Creek. They expected a large government payroll would be in the safe of Governor Thayer's hotel and that a major bullion shipment would be passing through on the railroad; the gang planned to take both.

Frank Howard, one of the outlaws, came into town to look over the situation, but began to have second thoughts and told Thayer about the gang's plan. Thayer notified the Albany County sheriff. When he got no action, he telegraphed Union Pacific officials.

American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

They contacted N.K. Boswell, the sheriff-elect and a member of the Rocky Mountain Detective Association, who had done detective work for the railroad. Boswell organized a posse of fifteen lawmen and met Howard, who guided them to the gang's camp. The gang had moved, but Howard took the posse to the ranch of Otto Oleson, who had been supplying them with information and supplies. With a little persuasion, Oleson told Boswell the location of the gang's new camp.

The posse moved quickly and surprised the gang. They captured Joe Minuse, Fred Ruby, Henry Harrington, and Charles "The Kid" Condon. When Boswell exercised his well-known persuasive techniques on Minuse, he disclosed that Albert C. Douglas, stage line superintendent, was their inside man. He also said that they had been part of a gang that included "Big Nose" George Parrotte, Charles "Dutch Charlie" Randall, Frank Towle, and Sim Wan, among others.

Rock Creek also had a lynching. On August 21, 1882, a professional hunter named Gillan shot and killed Robert Aiken, a clerk in C.E. Clay's store. Aiken said something that provoked Gillan, who left the store, then returned with his .40 Sharps rifle. He said, "the Irish agin the world" several times, then shot Aiken through the head. Clay and two customers disarmed him, tied him up and put him in the storage room behind the store, then notified Sheriff Boswell. Gillan was taken from the temporary jail during the night and hanged from a wagon tongue placed between two railroad cars on the siding. When Boswell arrived with the coroner, he spun the body around and said to the coroner, "I think he's yours." The coroner replied, "He's dead." With that, they left Gillan hanging and proceeded to the inquest for Aiken. Later, a railroad crew threw the body into a ditch along the right of way, and the townspeople eventually buried it in one of the town's two cemeteries. Nobody ever found out his first name.

THE LAST BIG excitement in Rock Creek was the Hole-in-the-Wall gang's express robbery at Wilcox, seven miles to the west, on June 2, 1899. As the nearest town of any size, Rock Creek became the base for the various posses searching for the gang.

The beginning of the end for Rock Creek came in 1887 when the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad reached Fetterman. Cattle from the north were no longer driven down for shipment, the stage line became local, and the freighting business dropped away. The final blow came in 1900 when E.H. Harriman rebuilt the Union Pacific along Dodge's original route, moving the railroad eleven miles southwest of Rock Creek. Most of the residents moved to the new town of Rock River, and in a few years, Rock Creek was abandoned and all but forgotten. In the mid-1970s, vandals burned the last of the buildings except the ruins of the pump house and the section house. Like many other once-lively western towns, Rock Creek now lives in the history and the fiction of the West.

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The CAPTIVE ORDEAL of NANCY MORTON

By DEAN KNUDSEN

On August 7, 1864, a band of roving Indians swept down on a wagon train traveling the Platte River Road in southern Nebraska. They killed all of the men, destroyed the wagons, and took captive a woman named Nancy Morton and a young boy named Danny Marble.

Now known as the Plum Creek Massacre, the incident has been written about often. Mrs. Morton herself gave numerous accounts of the attack and her five-month captivity, but until recently her earliest known version of the incident was written in 1891—some twenty-six years after the event. Now a deposition which she gave only a few weeks after being ransomed has come to light. It was taken by 1st Lt. Jeremiah Trigge of Company D, Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry, when the ordeal was still fresh in Morton's mind and is probably much more reliable than her later versions of the story. It not only includes new information but also illustrates the tricks that time can play with memory.

By 1860, the Platte River Road through the barren and inhospitable prairies of central Nebraska had been traversed in turn by forty-niners seeking gold, Mormons on a quest for religious freedom, and Oregon-bound settlers searching for new homes and opportunities. They had passed through the high plains in relative peace. Indian encounters were few. Disease was the travelers' greatest enemy, and they left only wagon ruts and a few lonely graves to mark their passing.

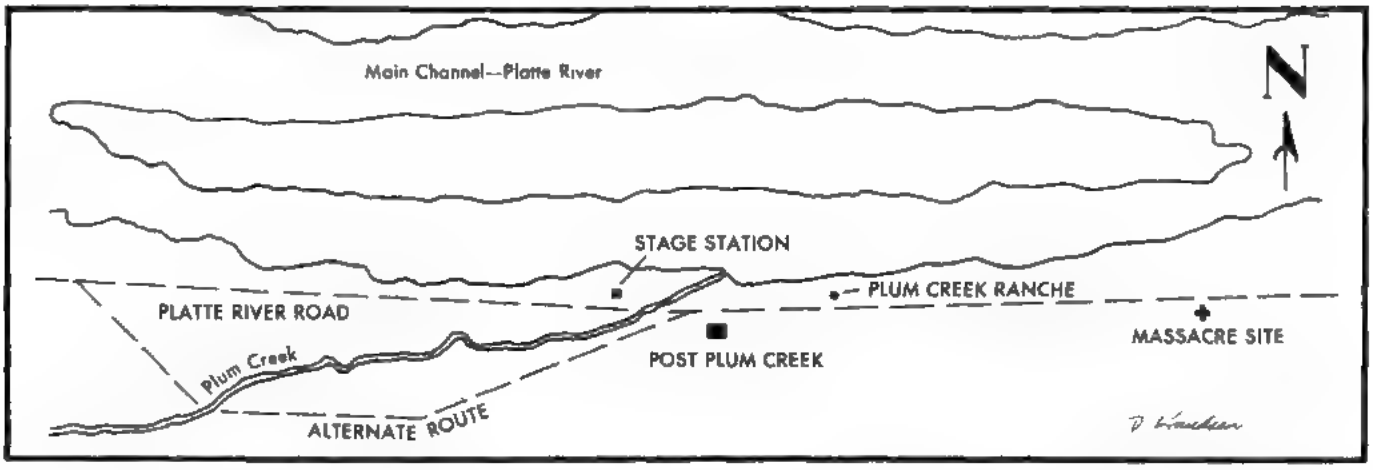
But that soon changed. At the coming of first the Pony Express and then the transcontinental telegraph line and increased traffic along the road to the gold mines of Colorado and Montana, Indians in the region grew uneasy. With the growing number of travelers along the road and the United States government's preoccupation with the Civil War in the East, armed confrontations between Indians and whites became frequent. Fearing an all-out Indian war on the frontier, the government authorized states to raise volunteer regiments for duty in the West. One such unit, the Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry commanded by Col. Samuel W. Summers, manned a series of posts along the Platte River Road to protect travelers and to keep open the telegraph line.

Onto that scene came eighteen-year-old Nancy Morton. She and her husband Thomas were making their third trip freighting supplies to miners in Colorado. Thomas, Nancy's brother William Fletcher, and her cousin John

Nebraska State Historical Society

Nancy Morton.

Before long Nancy noticed movement to the south. At first she thought it was a small herd of buffalo, but the freighters soon realized they were being attacked by Indians. With unbelievable speed the Indian horsemen overtook the wagon train and killed the teamsters before they could offer any defense.



Courtesy of the Author

A detail map of the Plum Creek, Nebraska, area showing the massacre site in relation to Plum Creek Station, based on the geological survey map of the area and descriptions of events by Nancy Morton.

Fletcher each drove one wagon. They planned to deliver their goods, make a healthy profit, and return to their home in Sidney, Iowa, before winter.

The three wagons set out from Nebraska City and made their way to Fort Kearny, Nebraska Territory, without incident. Stories of Indian unrest led them to stop at the fort and ask the soldiers what might await them on the road ahead. If they happened to speak to a relative newcomer to the plains, they might have been told that few Indians had been seen near the fort all summer. But if they spoke with someone in authority who had been on the frontier for any length of time, they might have been shown copies of recent telegrams such as one dated August 4, 1864, from Maj. George W. O'Brien at Fort Cottonwood: "Rec'd information that 200 Brule Sioux Indian warriors crossed to the north side of the Platte River 12 miles west of here August 1st on their way down north side of Platte to fight as they say Yanktons and Pawnee Indians. It might be well to watch their movements for although act friendly to the whites they may be on bad business."

WHATEVER they learned at Fort Kearny, the Morton party decided to press on. Somewhere west of the fort, apparently hoping to find safety in numbers, they joined a wagon train belonging to the Evans and Baker Freighting Company. On the night of August 6, 1864, the newly formed train of eleven wagons camped thirty miles west of Fort Kearny, almost within sight of Plum Creek Station.

That night was warm and still, and the travelers turned in early. Thomas Morton stood his turn as guard all night. The next morning the men yoked the oxen, then hitched the teams to their wagons, while Nancy boiled coffee and fried bacon for breakfast. When the train was ready to travel, it resumed the slow march west. An exhausted Thomas Morton crawled into the back of his wagon to catch up on lost sleep while his capable wife handled the wagon reins.

Before long Nancy noticed movement to the south. At first she thought it was a small herd of buffalo on the move, but the freighters soon realized they were being attacked by Indians. With unbelievable speed the Indian horsemen overtook the wagon train and killed the teamsters before they could offer any defense. Then they turned to the wagons. Anything useful was taken, then the wagons were set on fire. The only survivors, Nancy Morton and Danny Marble, whose father had been driving a wagon, were taken captive.

Up at Plum Creek Station, the small cavalry detachment could see the massacre but was powerless to prevent it. Lt. Joshua Bone urgently telegraphed Colonel Summers, "Send company of men here as quick as God can send them. One hundred Indians in sight firing on ox train."

In spite of the telegram's urgency, Colonel Summers spent two hours methodically preparing for the rescue attempt. Once underway, he set so slow a pace that one of his officers, Capt. Edward B. Murphy of Company A, became

Nebraska State Historical Society

Laura Roper and children Isabelle Eubanks, Danny Marble (left), and Ambrose Asher. Danny Marble was taken prisoner in the Plum Creek Massacre.

restive and had to be placed under arrest. In fact, ten hours passed before the party reached Plum Creek Station. By then, the Indians had escaped.

Newspapers in Denver and Omaha were outraged by Summers' lack of drive. They forever referred to the incident as "Summers' Slow March." In his defense, though, it must be said that the day was hot and humid, and he was mindful that setting too fast a pace would ruin his horses before he ever reached Plum Creek.

Not even the fastest of military responses could have helped Nancy Morton and Danny Marble. Within a few hours of the attack the captives were beyond the reach of any rescue efforts. For the next five months Nancy Morton would be a prisoner of the Sioux and the Cheyennes.

In her 1865 deposition, Nancy Morton related the details of how the Indians had attacked, killed the men, burned the wagons, and taken her and Danny Marble captive. She stated that as she was being taken south into Kansas one of her captors shot at her twice out of spite, but does not mention being wounded either during or after the attack. By 1891, however, her story had grown to include two arrow wounds in her side and a couple of ribs broken when a wagon wheel ran over her during the attack.

Author's Photo

Samuel W. Summers.

The number of attacking Indians also grew over the years. In 1865 Morton said that a total of sixty-five warriors were present, even numbering them by tribe—ten Sioux, ten Arapahos, one Kiowa, one half-blood, and the rest Cheyennes. Twenty-six years later she remembered a war party of five hundred braves.

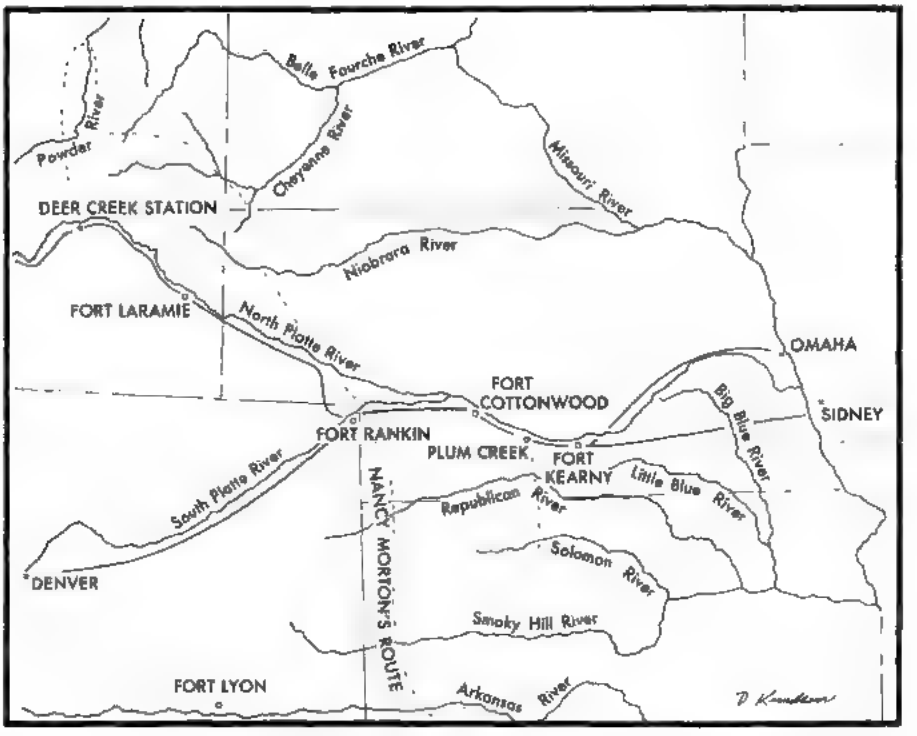
The triumphant warriors returned to their main village after three days of hard travel. There Nancy joined two other white women, Lucille Eubanks and Laura Roper, and four children who had been taken captive by Indian raiders on the Little Blue River in southern Nebraska. The nomadic Indian bands moved constantly to the south and west. The captives were brutalized if they made any attempt to escape or protest their treatment. Near the Colorado border, several Indian traders negotiated for the release of the captives. Eventually some were freed at Fort Lyon, Colorado Territory, including Laura Roper and Danny Marble, but young Marble died of illness shortly after.

Morton remained a captive of the Sioux and Cheyenne, who then moved northwest. They managed to travel

Left: The cemetery where the victims of the Plum Creek Massacre were buried. Right: The site of Plum Creek Station. The station and military post were located near the center of the treeline.

about thirty miles a day but suffered greatly from lack of water and had to rely on prickly pear cactus to quench their thirst. Morton's 1865 account describes the natural hardships and privations she endured through arid western Kansas. But in 1891 she added a number of personal ordeals at the hands of her captors. Once a warrior gave her a rifle and told her that if she could not hit a target of his choosing she would be put to death. Nancy hit the mark, and to further impress the warriors she then shot and killed an antelope on a distant hillside. Another time her life depended on the outcome of a series of horse races, but in every case she outwitted her captors and rode to victory.

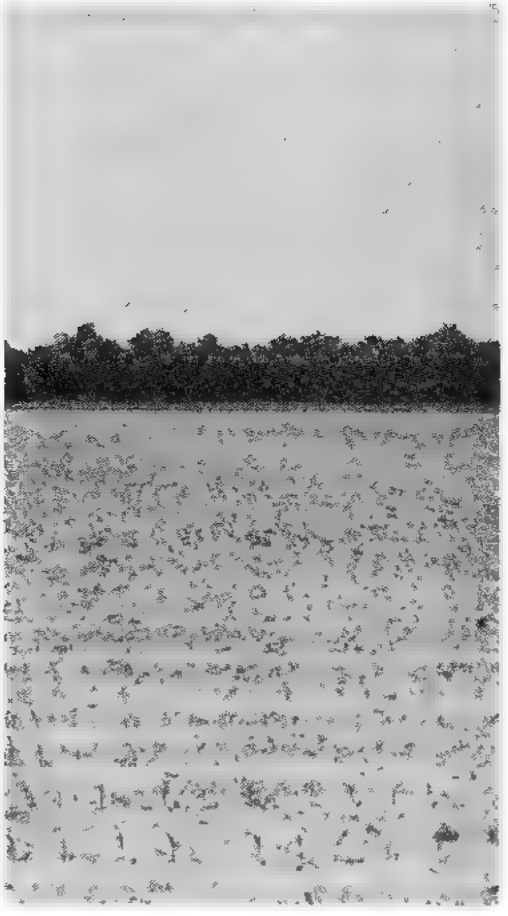
The Indians continued northward across the South and North Platte rivers and passed through the Nebraska panhandle, stopping occasionally to hunt and fish. In 1865 Nancy remembered fishing in a mountain stream when an Indian woman came along and shoved her into the water. She described it simply as "a pretty cold bath!" But by 1891 the story had grown. She and several Indian women



Courtesy of the Author

Map of the central plains showing the location of principal sites discussed in the article. The map also shows the approximate route taken by Nancy Morton's captors during the fall of 1864.

Both: Author's Photos



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had gone out to the middle of a large lake in a canoe. While she was intent on fishing, the other women threw her overboard. They so enjoyed watching her struggle to remain afloat in the ice cold water that they did not pull her back into the canoe until she had lost consciousness.

The Indians then moved north to a very large lake in the mountains. Nancy described it as "the most beautiful place I ever saw." At that point she may have been in the Black Hills, which would place her among the first white people to see that area. At any rate, game was scarce and Nancy's captors moved into Wyoming, crossed the Bozeman Trail, and joined a Sioux village of two hundred lodges on the Powder River. There, at the base of the Big Horn Mountains, Louis Richard and Joe Bissonette, Indian traders from Fort Laramie, came to the village and tried unsuccessfully to obtain Morton's release. The village broke up into smaller bands and moved on to the North Fork of Powder River. Three weeks after the failed first attempt, Bissonette and another Fort Laramie trader, Jules Coffey, succeeded in trading for Nancy's freedom.

After more than a week of travel in the dead of winter, Nancy Morton finally was brought into Fort Laramie. By a twist of fate, she never met the man instrumental in ransoming her from her captives, Maj. John Wood of the Seventh Iowa Cavalry. Wood was post commander at Fort Laramie and had learned about Nancy Morton's predicament when Lucille Eubanks had been brought to Fort Laramie. It was Major Wood who sent the Indian traders to negotiate Nancy's release, and it was Major Wood's offer of his own valuable gray mare and a tempting supply of trade goods that finally won her freedom.

Coincidentally, both Colonel Summers and Major Woods, who had played such different roles in Nancy's ordeal, were discharged from the federal service on January 31, 1865, when their regiment

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fell behind in its recruiting quotas. Woods' discharge notice arrived while the bargaining for Nancy's freedom was still underway, and he left for the East without knowing the results.

Nancy Morton's accounts of her captivity are fascinating and reveal a great deal about the American frontier in 1864. First, and most striking, in her 1865 account she is a keen observer of her captives and her environment. She does not say whether she learned the Sioux or Cheyenne language or whether her captors were fluent enough in English to communicate with her. But she was able to keep track of where she went and of what was going on around her. The experience gained in her two previous crossings of the Platte River Road is evident in her account of distances traveled throughout western Kansas and Nebraska. Her grasp of geography is quite sound, and she describes the countryside and the availability of water, firewood, and game—details essential to survival on the plains.

Author's Photo

The Powder River in northern Wyoming.

Another striking aspect of Nancy Morton's 1865 story is the incredible mobility of the Plains Indians. In a matter of a few weeks Nancy's captors ranged from central Kansas, through Nebraska, into the Dakotas, and finally into Wyoming's Powder River country. Regardless of how quickly he had pursued, Colonel Summers likely would not have caught so fleet a quarry. Standard cavalry tactics of the day were virtually useless against a foe who could strike at will and then melt into the vast prairies. The volunteer troopers were hamstrung by their dependence on supply bases and on horses that required grain brought at great expense from the East. Further crippling the cavalry, their horses did not have the speed or range of the Indians' grass-fed ponies. The Indians could literally run circles around their blue-clad opponents and then distance themselves from any threat the army might pose.

Morton's 1891 account of her captivity has all the trappings of one embellished through hundreds of tellings over the years. In her later stories, Nancy always depicts herself as stronger, smarter, and braver than her captors. She is always able to beat them at their own games. Such self-glorification casts doubt on those stories in general.

Even without the embellishments of her later stories, however, Morton's 1865 account reveals remarkable strength and tenacity. She witnessed the brutal murder of three family members, then endured five months of captivity among an unfamiliar people, not knowing from day to day what would become of her.

Nancy Morton returned to her home in Sidney, Iowa, in March 1865. Within a few months she remarried and resumed her productive life. She lived to the age of sixty-seven, and given the nature of her experiences on the frontier, she can perhaps be forgiven for embellishing a story or two.

Author's Photo

Southeastern Black Hills, near the site where Nancy Morton's captors camped.

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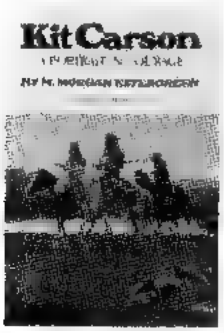

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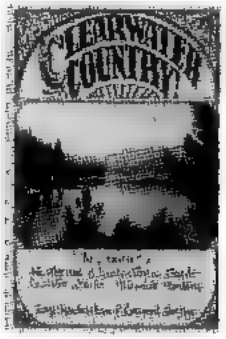

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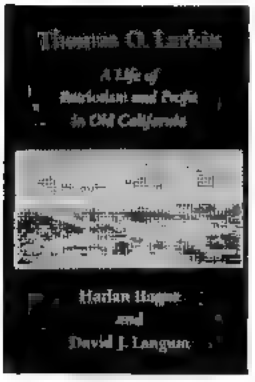

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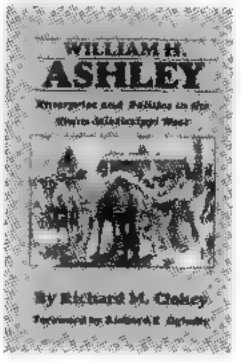

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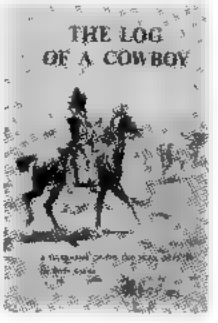

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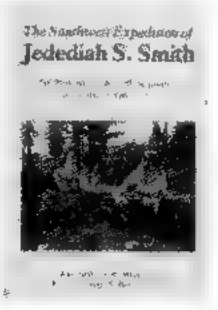

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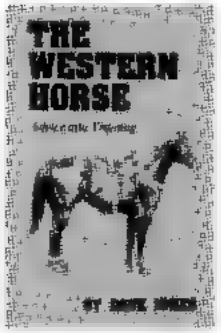

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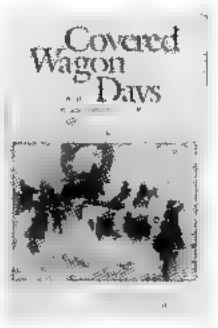

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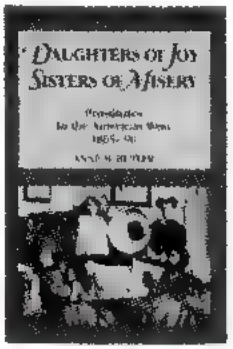

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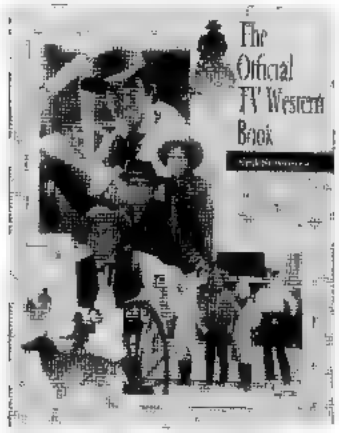

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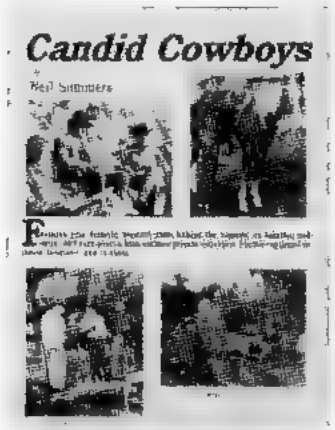

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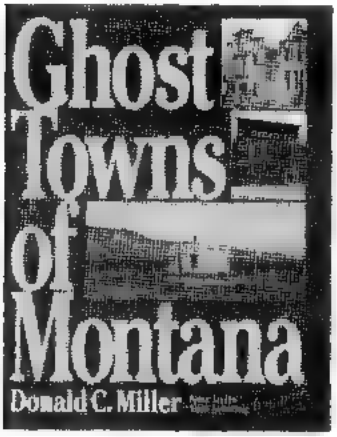

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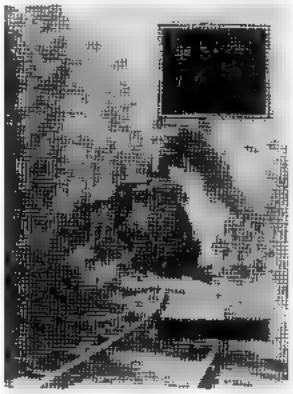

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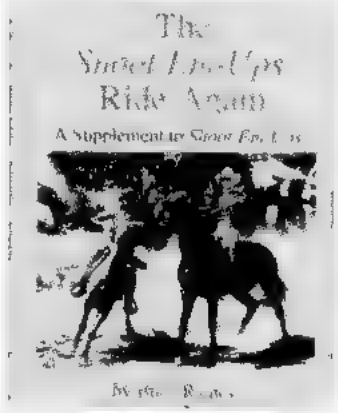

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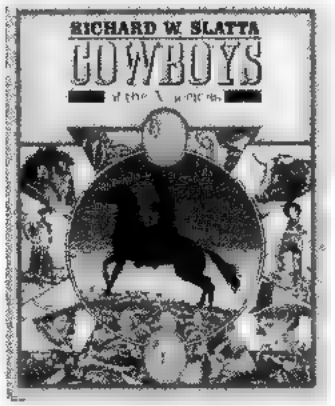

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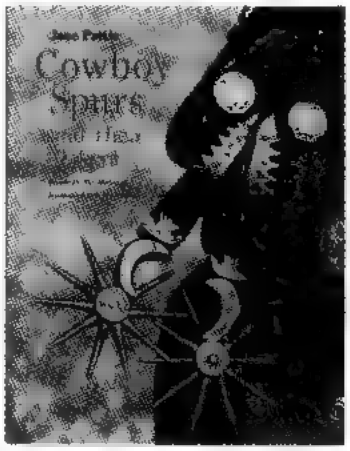

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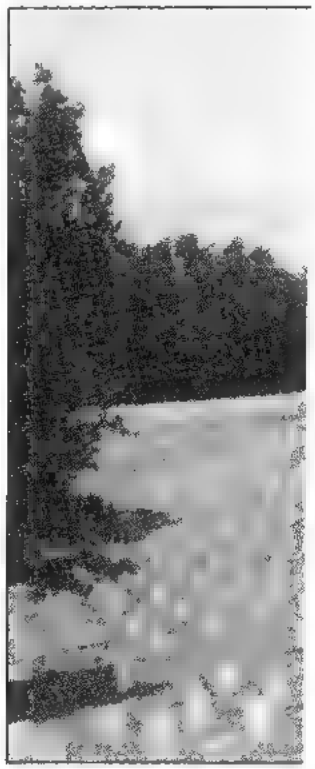
Jefferson Barracks

By DALE T SCHOENBERGER

Jefferson Barracks in south St. Louis County has been long forgotten as a frontier outpost, mostly because Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, the oldest continuous military post west of the Mississippi, was geographically more important to the western frontier. Still, Jefferson Barracks' glorious 120-year history is without peer.

Until 1946 Jefferson Barracks was the oldest continuously active military post west of the Mississippi. It provided protection for pioneers moving west, was the birthplace of the United States Cavalry, was the largest U.S. Army post in the 1840s, was a base for cavalry recruits in the Indian wars, and was an active post in every American conflict from the Mexican War to World War II.

On July 8, 1826, 1st Lt. Joshua B. Brant purchased Jefferson Barracks' sprawling 702.7 acres from the village



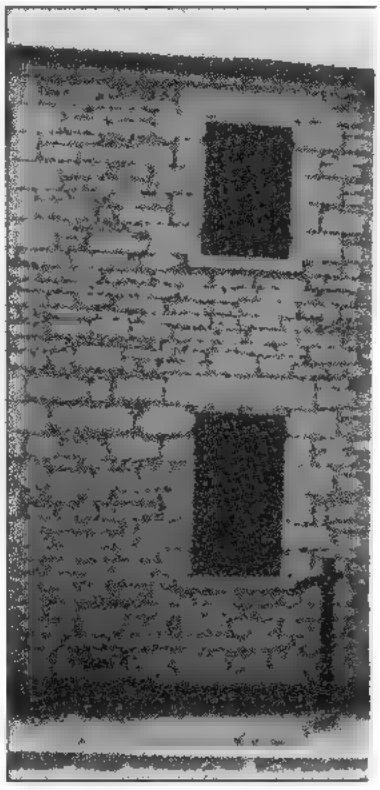
of Carondelet for five dollars in gold. The villagers were, in effect, donating the acreage as a military reservation. The land tract was ideal for a military post, and some of the land sat atop bluffs with a scenic view of the Mississippi River. Nearby Rock Springs (now Sylvan Springs) fed the post with fresh, clear water.

Two days after the purchase, Capt. Stephen Watts Kearny and four companies of the First U.S. Infantry arrived at the site to construct the post. Kearny called the camp "Cantonment Adams," after former President John Adams. A few months later the name was changed to "Cantonment Miller," in honor of Missouri Governor John Miller. The post officially became Jefferson Barracks on October 23, 1826. By then, Col. Henry Leavenworth commanded the post. Less than a year later, he established the fort which still bears his name.

During the ensuing decades Jefferson Barracks grew in importance and prominence. Many important military men and three future U.S. presidents served at the barracks. The list of notables included Braxton Bragg, Don Carlos Buell, Philip St. George Cooke, Jefferson Davis, Jubal A. Early, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Richard S. Ewell, John C. Frémont, Ulysses S. Grant, Benjamin H. Grierson, Henry W. Halleck, Winfield Scott Hancock, John B. Hood, Albert Sidney Johnston, Joseph E. Johnston, Stephen Watts Kearny, Robert E. Lee, William T. Sherman, Edmund Kirby Smith, Edwin V. Sumner, George H. Thomas, Zachary Taylor, and Earl Van Dorn.

Colonel Taylor and Lieutenant Grant served at Jefferson Barracks in 1832 and 1843, respectively, and both later became president. Grant arrived at Jefferson Barracks in 1843 on his first assignment from West Point and later met his future wife while serving there. Lt. Jefferson Davis, a future secretary of war and Confederate president, came to Jefferson Barracks in 1832. He had been assigned to bring Black Hawk, a Sauk warrior and army prisoner, to the barracks. The next year Davis was among officers assigned to the First U.S. Dragoons, the army's first mounted regiment, which had been organized at Jefferson Barracks. Capt. Nathan Boone, Daniel Boone's son, was among the First Dragoon's officers. That regiment later became the First U.S. Cavalry.

Among civilian guests at Jefferson Barracks were the renowned artist George Catlin and U.S. Sen. Daniel



Top left: Stone stable, erected in 1851, quartered four horses and two wagons. Top right: The National Cemetery at Jefferson Barracks. Bottom: Laborers' House, erected in 1851.

Webster. Webster reportedly killed a bear on the barracks reservation while visiting the post.

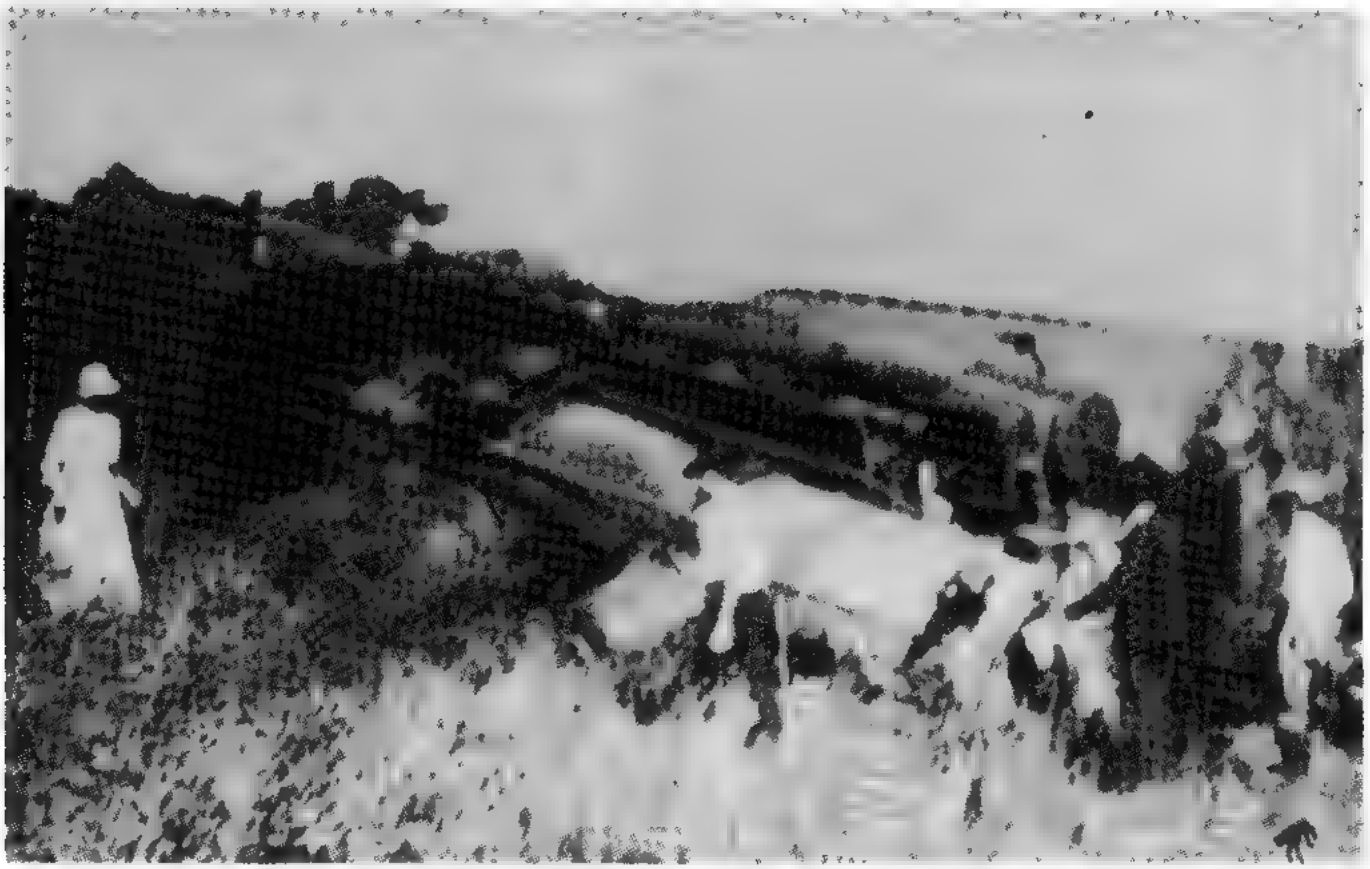
Until the outbreak of the Civil War, nearly every U.S. regiment served at Jefferson Barracks at one time or another. During the war, both the barracks hospital and the national cemetery were established. Twelve hundred Union soldiers killed in the war were buried in the cemetery, which the federal government still uses. One of the more famous of those buried there is Pvt. Richard Gentry, who died in 1843. Gentry, as a teenaged soldier, was present at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781 when Gen. Charles Cornwallis surrendered to Gen. George Washington, ending the fighting of the American Revolution.

During the Civil War, Jefferson Barracks served briefly in 1861 as the headquarters of the short-lived Western Department. The Department extended from Illinois west to the Rocky Mountains, including New Mexico Territory.

Jefferson Barracks played a key role in the army's refinement of punishment for deserters. Eleven percent of the army's desertions had occurred at the post, prompting the secretary of war to launch an investigation in 1889. It revealed gross misuse of authority by officers, who frequently brutalized enlisted men. The investigation prompted the army to change its code of punishment for enlisted men's infractions.

During the Indian wars, Jefferson Barracks was one of three major recruit depots, and cavalry recruits were assigned through the barracks. In the 1880s, young cavalrymen there received instruction in mounted and dismounted saber drill, horsemanship, marching, and the manual of arms. However, much of the training and drilling was left to post officers, and Trumpeter Henry Schuldt later complained that in 1885, he received very little training at Jefferson Barracks.

On June 30, 1946, the U.S. flag was lowered for the last time at Jefferson Barracks when it ceased to be an active post. In 1950 the St. Louis County Parks Department purchased 420 acres of the original Jefferson Barracks land tract. Today, hikers, picnickers, and sightseers can visit the well-kept grounds of Jefferson Barracks Historical Park.



Harry H. Whipple Photo

Harry Whipple (far right) stands by the wreckage of the Brownsville night train. The baggage car is visible in the background.

When Bandits Wreck Night Train to Brow

By CHARLES M. ROBINSON III

By 1915 most of the American "Wild West" was no longer wild. The last two frontier territories, Arizona and New Mexico, had been states for three years. Henry Ford had put the country on wheels, and the horse was on its way out.

But deep in South Texas it was a different story. This was still a hard land of thick chapparral, loose cattle, and Colt revolvers. People moved from place to place in wagons, and it was normal to see a man on a horse, his legs covered with leather chaps to protect him from the mesquite, huisache, and cactus. Vast ranches and open plains separated the area from the rest of Texas. Only two settlements below Laredo were large enough to be called cities, Brownsville and Edinburg (now Hidalgo). The only way in or out was by animal trail, or by the Morgan Line steamers which called at Point Isabel twice a week.

Then, in 1904, the St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico Railroad reached Brownsville, and on July 4 the first train pulled in the new depot. Settlement came rapidly after that and speculators arrived to open up the new territory. Young couples like Harry and Ethel Whipple of Quincy, Illinois, risked the princely sum of $50—almost three months' pay—on train tickets to Texas.

Just across the border, the iron-fisted Mexican president, Porfirio Diaz, guaranteed peace and Mexican cooperation along the Rio Grande. His tough rural police kept banditry in check. Still, as in California and Colorado in years past, opportunities were unlimited for someone with nerve and bluff, who could

About 1:00 a.m., Sheriff W.F. Van received a call from a porter from the train. He told the sheriff that bandits had wrecked the train near Olmito, set it on fire, and killed everyone on board. The porter had run three miles to a ranch to use the phone. Van called his deputy and told him to get moving.

Author's Photo

Harry Whipple, today at 100, can still recall band t raids and gunfights.

operate a shade within the law. However, Diaz was getting old, and Mexicans had languished under his regime for thirty years. In 1910, Diaz's government fell, and he fled into exile. Mexico plunged into a seven-year revolution

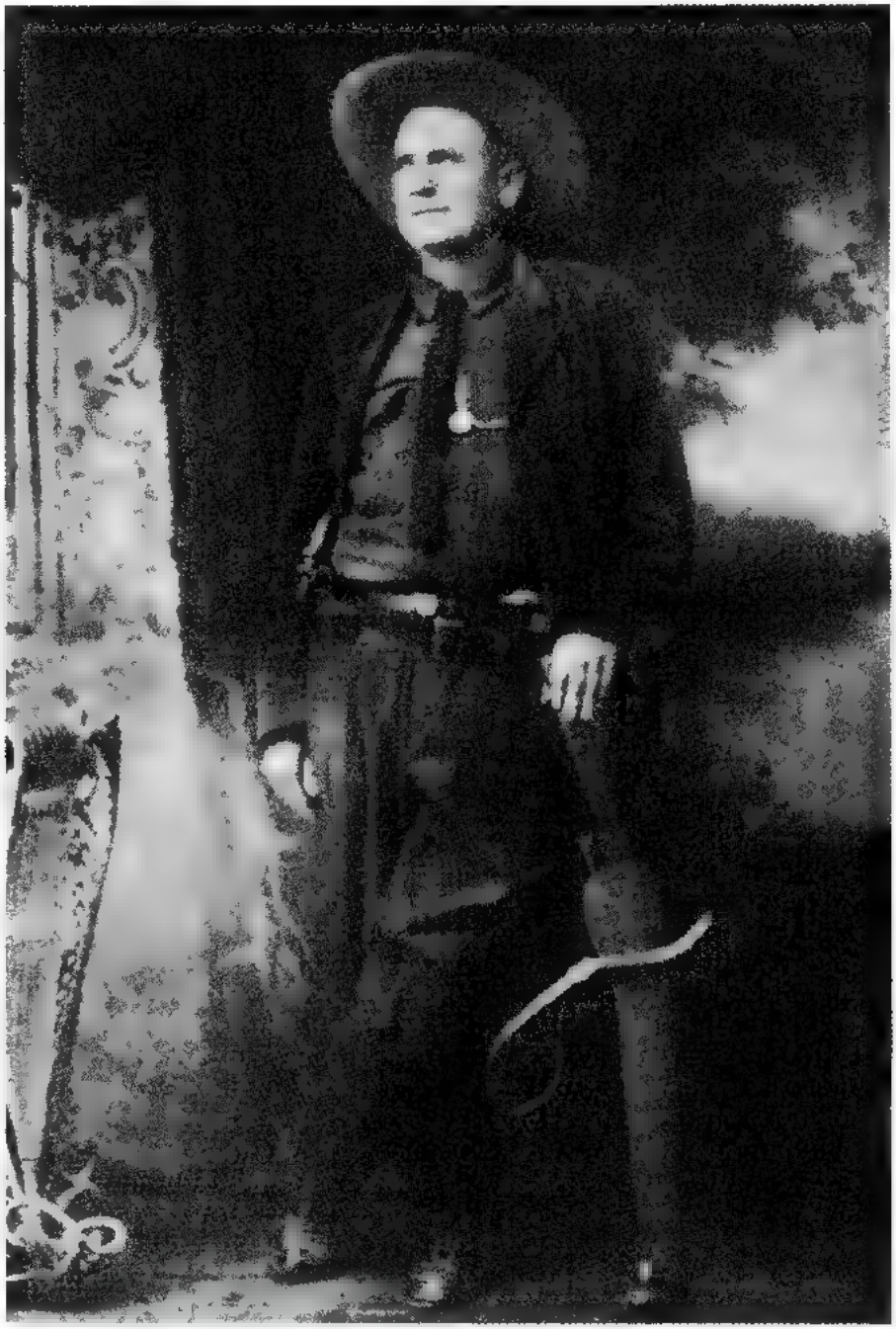
ed the nsville

that would ultimately claim ten million lives.

In 1913 a revolutionary army under Gen. Lucio Blanco defeated government forces at Matamoros. Law and order collapsed, and the Mexican side of the river fell into chaos. Outlaws who had remained quiet under Diaz could now raid into Texas, then flee across the border, beyond U.S. jurisdiction. In Mexico's supercharged political atmosphere, they could issue anti-American declarations and be assured of some public support. On the Texas side, people clamored for military protection. The army regarrisoned the aging frontier posts of Fort Brown and Fort Ringgold and squads of soldiers were sent to outlying settlements and ranches.

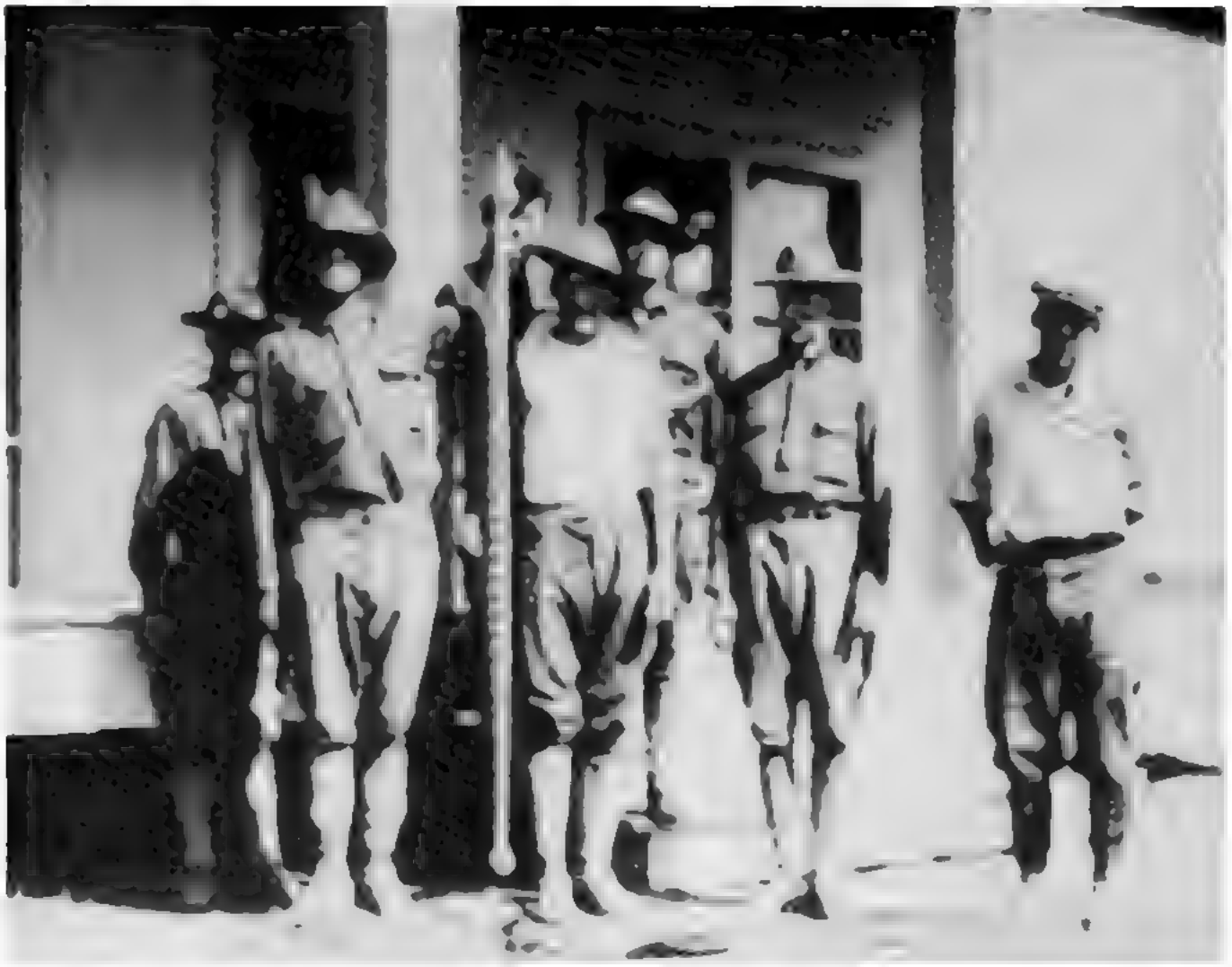
The summer and fall of 1915 were particularly bloody. On August 7 bandits attacked the King Ranch's Norias station, some sixty miles within Texas, killing several people, including Mexican ranch hands. Twenty-one days later a construction engineer and a farmer were captured and murdered. On September 5, the railroad bridge fifteen miles north of Brownsville was burned. A few days after that, a soldier named Richard Johnson was captured; his ears were cut off, then he was decapitated. His head was mounted on a post on the Mexican bank, where it could be seen from Texas. On September 25, an infantry camp at Toluca Ranch was attacked and a soldier killed. As September gave way to October, the list of violence grew longer.

On October 17, the night train pulled out of the station in the six-year-old boomtown of San Benito, destined for Brownsville, twenty miles away. Shortly after 11:00 p.m., Cameron County Sheriff W.T. Van was told the train was overdue. He called Harlingen, twenty-five miles up the line, and learned it had left on time. When he tried San Benito, the line went dead—the wires had been cut. Van ordered Chief Deputy John R. Peavey to alert



Harry H. Whipple Photo

The opening of South Texas came late in the development of the West, and this gun-toting resident was very much a part of the twentieth century.



Harry H. Whipple Photo

Soldiers show off a rattlesnake killed near a house they were assigned to guard. One local resident said the idea of soldiers sleeping on his porch to guard against marauders was "pretty scary."

every deputy in the county to be ready on short notice.

About 1:00 a.m., Van received a call from a porter from the train. He told the sheriff that bandits had wrecked the train near Olmito, set it on fire, and killed everyone on board. The porter had run three miles to a ranch to use the phone. Van called Peavey again, and told him to get moving. The latter rounded up three more deputies and headed north. A reporter from the Brownsville *Daily Herald* accompanied them.

As they reached Olmito, they found a burning trestle. In the firelight they could see part of the wrecked train and quickly discovered that most of the passengers were actually still alive. The posse fanned out into the brush to find the bandits but returned to the wreckage when they failed to located anyone.

To derail the train, bandits had removed the fishplates holding two rail sections together, then taken up the spikes to one of the rails. They fastened heavy wire to the loose rail and pulled it out as the train approached. The locomotive went off the train and into the ditch; the baggage and mail cars rolled over on their sides but the two passenger cars remained upright. Engineer H.H. Kendall died at his seat, his hand still on the throttle. Fireman R. Woodall lived, but was badly scalded.

THEN THE LOOTING and killing began. Four bandits entered one end of a coach and started shooting at the men seated at the opposite end. Three of the passengers were soldiers of the Third Cavalry, in civilian clothes. One, a corporal identified only as McBee, was just picking himself up from the floor after the wreck. He was gunned down and died instantly. Pvt. Claude Brashear went up to the outlaw leader and started to talk; the man shot Brashear in the face. Then they turned their guns on Cpl. C.H. Laymond and shot him in the neck and leg. Miraculously, Brashear and Laymond survived.

As the shooting started, Dr. S.E. McCain, state health officer, and Harry Wallace of Brownsville ducked into the toilet and locked the door. The outlaws demanded they open up. When they refused, the bandits riddled the door with bullets. McCain was mortally wounded in the abdomen, and Wallace was hit in the wrist and arm. Brownsville businessman Morris Edelstein and attorney John Kleber dove between the seats and were shaken, but unhurt.

Peavey said that when the deputies arrived, "The lights were still burning dimly, and we found everyone on the floor and some under the seats." Posse members managed to convince the terrified Wallace that the bandits were gone, and he opened the door of the toilet. They began questioning survivors and tending the injured.

By early morning, word of the wreck had spread throughout the area. San

As the shooting started, Dr. S.E. McCain, state health officer, and Harry Wallace of Brownsville ducked into the toilet and locked the door. The outlaws demanded they open up. When they refused, the bandits riddled the door with bullets. McCain was mortally wounded in the abdomen.

Benito High School student Grady St. Clair and two of his friends decided to go out and see for themselves. "We just thought that was more important than going to school that day," St. Clair said. A few miles to the east, Harry and Ethel Whipple closed their general store, took their camera, and went to have a look. Sheriff's deputies, Rangers, military authorities, and sightseers all gathered around the twisted wreckage. "The engineer was still under the engine, scalded to death," St. Clair remembered. The smell of gunsmoke and fresh blood hung over the coach.

Peavey and his brother, Clarence, also a deputy, searched the area. They found the tools and wire the bandits had used to remove the rail. A trail of luggage and clothing led toward the river and deputies followed it while Rangers worked the wreck scene. The clothing led to the ford where the bandits had crossed into Mexico. Unable to do anything more, the deputies returned to the wreck. There they found the Rangers had arrested seven Mexicans and already hanged four of them. Some said they were bandits. To Peavey, the evidence of the trail said otherwise. They were almost certainly innocent people who happened to live nearby, and it disgusted him. "It was an ugly and grim sight," he wrote. "I had seen things like this before but to me it still seemed cold and cruel." Harry Whipple later noticed the four bodies lined up by the road.

Military authorities sent a squad of soldiers to camp at an oil derrick about 300 yards from the wreck site. About dusk, the following Sunday, bandits fired into the camp from the brush, mortally wounding one soldier.

NO ONE EVER learned who was responsible for the wreck of the night train to Brownsville. With people still alive who remember it, old accusations still rise up from time to time. There are even some Hispanic activists who hint that it was a blow for freedom against American oppression. Be that as it may, it was one of the last bandit raids on a train in the United States—perhaps it was even the last. As such, it enters history as a closing event in the winning of the West.

Harry H. Whipple Photo

Dead bandits allowed to decompose after a raid on their camp show the hatred which flared on the border.

Rhodes Was One of

By WILLARD H. PORTER

As I commence this story, I glance at the title and ask myself, "Should I really say that?" Was John Rhodes, the rancher-roper from Arizona, really "one of a kind"?

An image comes to me: an old man on a flea-bitten gray gelding. Not much for looks, but hold on! With quick strides the gray takes the old cowboy to the after end of a steer. The cowboy tosses a heel loop. The slack rope is pulled. The horse is reined back. Ropes tighten as the header dismounts to tie the steer's hind legs. The flag judge signals to the timers, who stop their watches and pass on the official time to the announcer.

"The time for John Rhodes and Buckshot Sorrells—13.1 seconds. They go into the lead in the team roping . . . . let's give 'em a hand." The announcer's final words are drowned out by applause.

Another image: the numeral 77 looms in the mist of rodeos past. That was John Rhodes' age when he last roped at Tucson's *Fiesta de los Vaqueros*. He was a rodeo roper for over five decades—not just a roper, but a great roper.

Yes, John Rhodes was one of a kind, and he deserves the title. He was admired by his fans and respected by his peers.

One night in 1956, the outdoor rodeo arena in Phoenix was lit up like New York City's Times Square. Rex Allen had just finished singing his smash version of "This Old House" to the high, deep grandstand which that night may have held nearly 12,000 spectators.

Then came the team roping, also called "team tying" in those days because ropes were secured to saddle horns and the header dismounted to

National Cowboy Hall of Fame

The late John Rhodes mounted on his great, flea-bitten gray gelding, Pat. On Pat he heeled many a fast steer for various partners.

a Kind

make a tie. A few so-so runs garnered ripples of applause from the knowledgable crowd. Then, at that performance of one of the richest rodeos in the Southwest, a run that ropers talk about to this day turned the big grandstand into a madhouse. John Rhodes and his partner, John Clem of Chandler, headed for their final steer.

They had already secured their first steer in 15.9 seconds to win third money in the go-round. They had flattened their next steer in 15.6 to win second money in the next go-round. Now with lightning speed Clem snagged the horns of their third steer and Rhodes picked up both hind legs right out of the air.

The crowd stirred. When the announcer bellowed the time—13.1—the spectators went crazy. Their roar of approval echoed from the wall of steel and concrete seats and back into the arena. The time was the fastest of the whole production. Rhodes and Clem won the go-round and would cart off the championship, along with $3,591 between them.

The crowd was still cheering when Clem walked back to his horse and mounted. In a display of sheer joy and appreciation, Rhodes lifted his hat and waved it. His linkage with the crowd was spontaneous and complete.

John Rhodes was born October 3, 1887, at Young, Arizona. As he grew, so did the tempers and emotions of a pair of families feuding over catte and sheep beneath the Tonto Rim. The Pleasant Valley Range War, as the bloody feud was called, was fought between the Grahams, who had extensive sheep holdings, and the Tewksburys, a clan of cattle people. When John was only a two-year-old button, the feud claimed the life of his father, who was a Tewksbury. John was legally adopted by his mother's second husband, John Rhodes, Jr.

Which side of the feud emerged victorious is unclear, since few members of either family survived the violence. Rodeo history, however, makes it abundantly clear that one of the remaining male children grew up to be a fantastic steer heeler. But before he became known for his rodeo skills, John Rhodes learned the cattle business from pink eye to calf crop. He owned several ranches in the Mammoth area, where he lived most of his life, including the YI from 1917 to 1933 and the 60,000-acre Sacaton Ranch from 1934 to 1953.

National Cowboy Hall of Fame

John Rhodes.

On the vast rangelands of those spreads, he learned to rope. He learned to throw a loop so that a pair of moving horns would run into it. And he learned to "break" a heel trap just right—over the flank of a cow brute. He learned all that in the days before rodeo cowboys were called "athletes," before they began doing their arena work with "scientific applications."

Rhodes took his ranch work into the professional arena with pride and zeal. He rode the best horses he could raise, train, or buy. An early mount was Benny, a gelding that could do it all—calves, steers, and partnership ropings.

Another was Pat, the flea-bitten gray. Rhodes was up on Pat that night when he and Clem won the big Phoenix team roping. Pat and his rider were two of a kind: a little bit ornery, difficult to understand, yet loaded with talent. Rhodes used to ask unsuspecting souls to ride Pat in the grand entry, "just to get him warmed up." Then he'd watch, giggling to himself, as Pat ran away with the rider.

Pat was raised in Oklahoma, a son of One-Eye Waggoner and out of a mare by Yellow Wolf. In his younger years he was roped on by Zeano Farris, Cliff Whatley, and Jiggs Burk. Later, Dick and Speck Wilson, Tucson livestock haulers who were also rodeo ropers, owned Pat. Rhodes bought him from them for $1,000. He had four months to pay. Two days before the time was up, he added $40 to his rodeo earnings and paid the Wilsons in full. With Rhodes tight in the saddle, Pat went on to win lots more money than $960 every 120 days.

Take, for example, an eight-day period in 1956, the same year he and Clem won Phoenix. At Prescott, Rhodes won first in both go-rounds and, of course, the average. His partner was Dale Smith, and they secured two head in 12.8 and 14.2. Paired with John Clem, he was also first in the second go-round.

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Two prominent team ropers of the old days: Jim Brister, on the head, and John Rhodes preparing to make the heel catch. The rodeo: Phoenix, Arizona.

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National Cowboy Hall of Fame

John Rhodes, on Pat, is shown with John Clem, one of his steady team roping partners.

ship in 1958. He and his partner had tied down a steer in 12 and then they tied another in 13, and I said, 'It looks kind of tough, John.'

"He said, 'I've come from behind before . . . we can still do it.'

"We rode into the barrier," Smith continues, "and it was snowing. First time in twenty years it had snowed in Ajo [Arizona]. We drew this old black steer that had outrun everybody in the country. He'd never been placed on.

"I was thinking that I couldn't break the barrier . . . I just couldn't. So I had to let the steer out safely. He could roll. But we rolled, too, and I roped him around both horns and turned away. Old Rhodes, he ducked in there and heeled that black steer by both hind feet . . . and I stepped off and tied him in 13.2.

"That left me winning second day money and second in the average . . . and in the lead for the championship. Then the last team—Donny Nichols and Pete English—tied a steer in 10. This moved John and me . . . and I lost the championship that year by $13."

Then the three of them hauled to Pecos, Texas, where the rodeo committee presented tie-down team roping for a few years. Lady Luck was still traveling with them, too. Rhodes and Smith won the first go and placed third in the second. They were second in the average. Rhodes and Clem won fourth in the first go. During that short time, Rhodes collected $1,578 worth of team checks—not bad money in those days.

Rhodes looked good mounted on Pat. The little gray never ran away with him, like some others. When the rider reined the gray toward the heels of a running steer, folks wondered how he ever managed to stay in the saddle. Like many southwesterners, he rode with long stirrups and leaned back. And he gripped with his legs. It only looked as if he were being run away with.

Pat could change leads in mid-gallop, and he had a way of lunging into position for the heel toss. And Rhodes never waited. He knew that to win rodeos you had to "have cattle in the loop." So he threw the instant he had the chance and, more often than not, he came up with a pair of legs caught neatly below the hocks.

"He had a great competitive spirit," says Dale Smith, now an Arizona rancher. "He never rode behind the barrier but what he wasn't going to win. We had to tie a steer in 13.3 or less for me to beat Ted Ashworth for the champion-

John Rhodes heels for Buckshot Sorrells, who starts down off his horse to make a hind-

"I was thinking that I couldn't break the barrier... So I had to let the steer out safely. He could roll. But we rolled, too, and I roped him around both horns and turned away. Old Rhodes, he ducked in there and heeled that black steer by both hind feet...and I stepped off and tied him in 13.2."

The records show that Ashworth was the champion in 1958, with $5,363 to Smith's $5,350. "But old Rhodes, I sure was proud of him," Smith concludes. "At the time we roped, we did what we had to do. And I know he never thought for a second we weren't going to do it. He never weakened."

In addition to Smith and Clem and his son, Tommie, John Rhodes roped with a whole host of partners. They liked him and considered it a privilege to rope with him. Some of his other partners were Dave Mansur, Fred Darnell, Ralph Narramore, Art Arnold, Asbury Schell, Marion Getzwiller, Claude Henson, and we certainly don't want to forget the fellow who came to me in that image when I started to write, Buckshot Sorrells.

Rhodes roped longer than any of his peers. Some say he roped so long that his arm just gave out. Sports medicine calls it tendonitis. A common name is tennis or fishing elbow. That's what Rhodes had—roping elbow.

He died in a Tucson rest home in December 1974. He was eighty-seven years old. At one time or another, he probably won money at every rodeo he ever went to. He was that good.

Heck, he was one of a kind.

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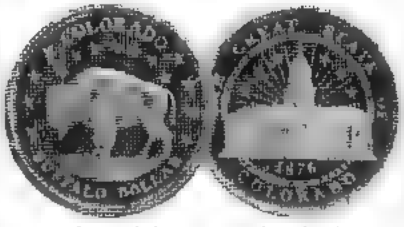

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The Pronghorn's Fight for Survival

By ROBERT JOE STOUT

In the early nineteenth century, when white men first crossed the Rocky Mountains, an estimated 100 million pronghorns lived on the ranges of the West. They were a truly American animal and roamed the ranges long before the first bison, but by 1910 only a few thousand remained. Naturalists like Merritt Cary, who wrote a biological survey of Colorado in 1908, were predicting that the graceful animals would be extinct in another few years.

Fences, blizzards, sportsmen, sheep raisers, and disease contributed to their demise. Albert C. Antrei wrote in *Nature Magazine* in 1939 that "wherever the plow dug deep, and the barbed-wire fence rose from the ground, the finger of fate pointed elsewhere for the Pleistocene antelope."

For millions of years the tawny, fleet-footed beasts had made the West their home. They were the last—and hardiest—survivors of several varieties of cloven-hoofed quadrupeds that roamed the area during the Pleistocene age, which began two million years ago and ended approximately 10,000 years ago. Fossil remains show great variations in body size and horn construction, but fossils of pronghorns identical to those that roamed the plains in the nineteenth century were uncovered at Scotts Bluff and Hays Spring, Nebraska, in clay carbon-dated to several hundred thousand years old.

The pronghorns roamed a two-million-square-mile area. They migrated only in winter, when those from higher altitudes moved downhill to escape heavy snows. Curious, frisky, and often pugnacious, the pronghorns preferred open country, where they could use their exceptional eyesight and speed to defend themselves.

Maj. J.B. Pond, describing train travel through Colorado in the winter of

Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department

Commercial hunters often lured herds of pronghorns into coulees, or blinds, then shot them for their heads and horns.

Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department

A hunting party, possibly from Fort Laramie, bagged these pronghorns circa 1880. Pronghorn venison was the staple food for soldiers, settlers, miners, and draymen for nearly two decades after the Civil War.

1868–69, reported seeing "antelope [that] had all left the open plains, and were . . . sheltering among the foot-hills. For 10 or 12 miles in Cache le Poudre Valley and all the way west of the train, about three-quarters to one-half mile away, was one long band of Antelope, 20 to 40 rods wide, practically continuous and huddled together for warmth."

Indians appreciated the value of the herds that surrounded them and used pronghorns as a major source of food and hides. They hunted pronghorns by waiting in ambush at salt licks or grazing places, or by driving herds into blinds or canyons from which they could not escape. A Commissioner of Patents report in 1851 described an Indian pronghorn kill: "The pens are formed of branches of trees arranged in a circle, one side of which is incomplete, and approached by a lane formed of walls of the same material, widening outwards. Into the open extremity of this lane the antelopes are gently urged by the Indians, and thence along into the circle: whereupon the opening is filled up by means of brush, and the work of destruction commenced with arrows and clubs.

"Although exceedingly nimble, yet such is their stupidity that . . . [the pronghorns] will not attempt to leap the barriers which confine them, however slight."

Early white hunters took advantage of the pronghorns' innate curiosity to lure the beasts close. Mountain man James Capen Adams decoyed them by tying a bandanna to a stick upwind from them and waiting for the animals to approach. "To lie on one's back, with the feet in the air and the rifle between the legs, is a favorite and very successful mode of hunting them," he commented. Early pioneers discovered that the flapping canvas of their wagons so enthralled the pronghorns that they would approach wagon trains, where teamsters could shoot them at will.

California pronghorn herds fell victim to gold hunters in the 1850s. One hunter slew and skinned over 5,000 pronghorns in 1859 from one ambush near a waterhole. (He left the carcasses to rot.) Another reportedly fed the town of Goldfield, Nevada, on antelope throughout the winter of 1867–68.

Major Pond noted in 1869 that, "Many wagonloads were brought to Denver and sold, three or four carcasses for two bits, that being the smallest coin in use." Pronghorn meat sold for twenty-five cents a pound in San Francisco, ten cents a pound in Omaha, and twenty-five cents a carcass in Cheyenne in the 1870s. Many commercial hunters took and sold only the tenderloin, leaving the rest of the animals to rot. The rail hands who built the transcontinental railroad ate so much antelope meat stew that an Irishman named "Paddy" Williams "began to hop around and flash his behind, just like them beasties do," a Chautauqua speaker joked to audiences at the turn of the century.

In the decade between 1870 and 1880 alone, hunters killed an estimated ten million pronghorns in the West—an average of 2,500 a day. By 1880, antelope meat was so plentiful that hunters could no longer sell it. The hides still brought a few pennies, however, so commercial hunters continued their slaughter. They shipped over 60,000 hides to St. Louis from Wyoming in 1881 alone.

By the mid-1890s, pronghorn hunters had wiped out many individual herds. More pronghorns died in a shorter period of time than bison. There never was a concentrated effort to exterminate them; they simply were available, edible, and easy to kill. They seemed so plentiful that few Westerners seemed to notice their thinning ranks until they had almost completely disappeared from the high plains.

Hunters weren't the pronghorns' only foes. Cattle and sheep drove them off many ranges or, at best, forced them to

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compete for grass. Droughts dried up their water holes and epidemics killed thousands of them in 1858 and 1873. Winter blizzards trapped fleeing pronghorns and the beasts froze or starved to death, or, trapped in the snow, they became meals for wolves. Four-fifths of the pronghorns in Montana died during the winter of 1892-93.

Wolves, coyotes, eagles, and mountain lions fed off the fringes of the herds, taking the frail and the young. The pronghorns generally were a match for their natural enemies, though. Those they could not outrun, they could usually evade. If called on to fight, the pronghorns could be formidable foes.

William M. Rush described a pronghorn-coyote fight that occurred forty-five years ago. The pronghorn doe "ran furiously at the wild dog with front feet slashing at its back. When the coyote dodged at right angles, she rammed at it with her pointed horns. For a moment it seemed that the coyote would be cut to pieces, but the wild dog was too clever. It darted into the sagebrush and escaped."

In October 1898, Ernest Thompson Seton witnessed a fight between two pronghorn bucks. "They careened around like twin meteors," he wrote in a 1911 issue of *Harper's Weekly*, "this way and that, then our way; at first changing line, but later directly towards us."

A golden eagle followed overhead, certain that the victorious buck would leave the vanquished for its meal. Seton and his companions reined up to watch. To his amazement, the smaller buck continued charging straight toward his little party.

"His heaving flanks and gaping, dribbling mouth showed that he could not hold out much longer," Seton continued. "He was clearly between two deaths—which should he choose? He seemed not to hesitate—the 200 yards shrank to 100, the 100 to 50—then the pursuer slacked his speed . . . The fugitive kept on until he dashed right in among our startled horses." The eagle landed and the pursuing buck circled Seton's cavalcade, but the vanquished buck remained within the circle until both the victorious buck and the eagle gave up and left.

By 1910, only a few thousand of the estimated 100 million pronghorns remained in the West. Colorado's once immense herds dwindled from two million in 1860 to 2,000 in 1910. Ernest J. Greenwalt, writing in *Outdoor West* in 1932, noted, "they gave their lives by thousands to feed the construction crews of transcontinental railways; every early-day trapper and explorer shot them for camp meat; from the Platte to the Sacramento Valley they furnished food on the overland trails, and every pioneer and rancher stocked its meat for winter use."

Naturalists like W.T. Hornaday and Charles Sheldon took up the pronghorns' cause and badgered, bribed, and coerced government officials into setting up wildlife refuges where the animals could live without fear of hunters, trappers, or sheepmen. The largest of these were the Hart Mountain Antelope and Mule-Deer Refuge in eastern Oregon and the Charles Sheldon Antelope Refuge in Nevada. By 1960, the pronghorn population in the West had reached 400,000 animals and has remained constant since then.

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Was Wyatt Earp Cowed?

By HAROLD L. EDWARDS

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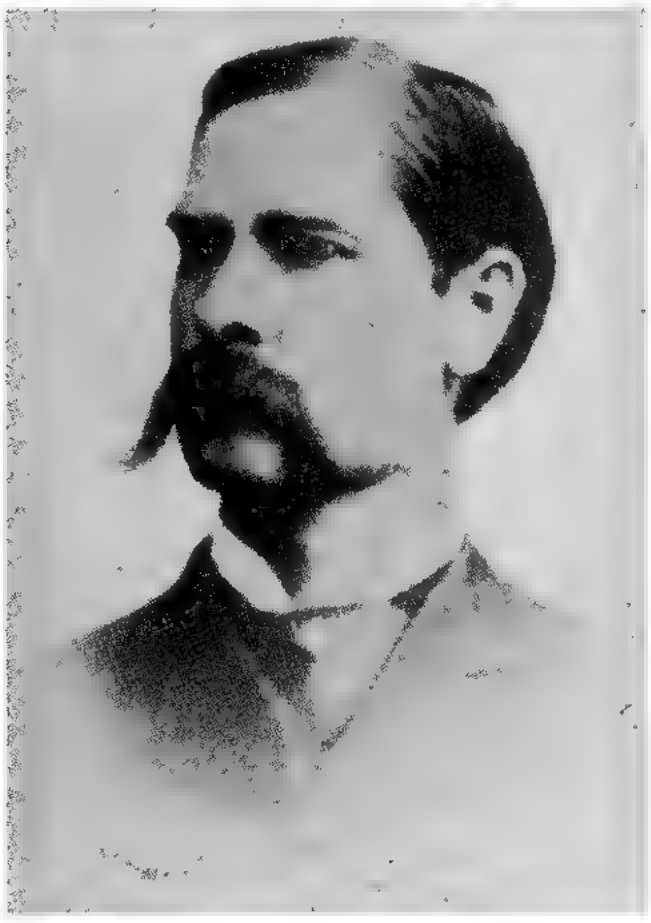


Wyatt Earp as he appeared in the spring of 1884.

Many American frontier gunmen are shrouded in mystery, and Wyatt Earp is no exception. Some of his exploits are well documented, such as the shootout at the OK Corral in Tombstone, Arizona, October 26, 1881. However, his personality still eludes researchers. Was Wyatt Earp "brave, courageous, and bold," or was he cold, calculating, and even craven?

Earp tended to aggrandize his deeds, motives, and accomplishments, often at the expense of others. In so doing, he opened himself to criticism. Earp was certainly controversial and became an enigma. He remains one today.

An example of an Earp distortion is his tale of an 1873 confrontation with notorious Texas gunman Ben Thompson in Ellsworth, Kansas. On August 15 Ben Thompson's brother, Billy, went on a drunken spree and senselessly shotgunned and killed Sheriff Chauncy B. Whitney. While lawmen were still unorganized, Ben Thompson and some of his friends held the town in check as Billy fled.

According to a statement Earp made years later, the situation in Ellsworth was explosive. Thompson controlled the city, and law officers were hiding. As Billy Thompson prepared to leave, he traded his shotgun to his brother for a rifle. Earp, an innocent bystander, urged Deputy Marshal "Happy Jack" Morco to "jump out [from his hiding place in a store] and get them while they are trading guns." Morco refused to move.

After Billy Thompson rode out of town unhindered, Ben Thompson strode up and down the street, taunting the town's lawmen. No one made an effort to arrest him. Mayor James Miller ordered City Marshal "Brocky Jack" Norton to arrest Thompson, but Norton refused. The town was "treed."

Earp disgustedly observed to the mayor, "You don't have much of a police force." The mayor asked what Earp would do, and he replied that he would either arrest Thompson or kill him. At that the mayor dismissed the city officers and made Earp the marshal of Ellsworth.

Armed with legal authority—and two revolvers—Earp walked steadily across the street toward Thompson and his cohorts. Thompson, shotgun in his hands, asked Wyatt what he wanted; "I want you, Ben," Wyatt replied. Apparently cowed by Wyatt's display of courage, Thompson said, "I would rather talk than fight." Wyatt's classic rejoinder was, "I'll get you either way, Ben." An unnerved Ben Thompson meekly surrendered.

Earp's version of the affair, which Stuart Lake used in his controversial 1931 biography of Earp, is an excellent story about Earp's courage; however, it is not true. Indeed, Billy Thompson did shoot Sheriff Whitney in Ellsworth, and Ben and cohorts covered his escape. The situation between Ben Thompson and the city's lawmen was tense, but Mayor Miller approached Thompson and negotiated his surrender. Wyatt Earp was not part of the incident.

Another of Earp's questionable assertions revolves around his March 1882 stand-up shootout with Curly Bill Brocius in Arizona. There had been trouble between Curly Bill and the Earp brothers for some time. It stemmed from the OK Corral fight in which Wyatt, Virgil, and Morgan Earp, with Doc Holliday, shot and killed brothers Tom and Frank McLaury and Billy Clanton. Curly Bill Brocius was not in the fight.

Later, on December 28, someone ambushed and wounded Virgil Earp on a Tombstone street. On March 18, 1882, Morgan Earp was assassinated while playing pool in Hatch's saloon. Wyatt Earp organized a posse, and tracked down and killed suspects Frank Stillwell and Florentino Cruz. Then he started searching for Curly Bill, whom he also suspected in the attacks.

Chuck Parsons Collection

Arizona State Historical Society

Left: Ben Thompson was an ace gunman from Texas in the 1870s. Was he bluffed by Wyatt Earp in Ellsworth, Kansas, in 1873? Right: William Breakenridge, while a deputy sheriff of Cochise County, Arizona, was a contemporary of Wyatt Earp in Tombstone.

In late March, Earp and his posse found Curly Bill at Iron Springs in the Whetstone Mountains. As they closed in, Earp dismounted and with shotgun in hand slipped towards the waterhole. Other members of the posse followed.

Earp said he saw Curly Bill, seemingly alone, at a campfire. Brocius also saw Earp and went for his shotgun. All of the posse members except Texas Jack Vermillion fled; Earp stood firm and exchanged shotgun blasts with Curly Bill. Shot shredded Earp's clothing, but Curly Bill took Earp's shot in the chest and died instantly. Unseen members of Curly Bill's gang started shooting, and Earp and Vermillion retreated while returning fire. Neither side forced the battle.

Earp's courage in the face of Curly Bill's shotgun is noteworthy—that is, if the battle ever occurred. If the fight did happen, researchers do not know its details. Curly Bill could have died exactly as Earp claimed, or another member of the posse may have killed him. Curly Bill's men denied such a fight ever occurred, and said that Curly Bill had left the area several months before. In any event, men on both sides of the conflict were strangely quiet about it. However, Curly Bill was not heard from again.

Earp made other claims to fame. He supposedly held off a lynch mob singlehandedly in Tombstone on January 4, 1881. The mob was bent on hanging murder suspect John O'Rourke. However, Marshal Ben Sippy, with the assistance of several deputies, actually dispersed the mob and got the prisoner safely out of town.

WHILE IT IS true that Earp touted his own accomplishments, others were equally energetic in debunking his claims. Such efforts to discredit him began as early as 1894, when the *Los Angeles Times* published an unbelievable report of Earp's adventures.

The story protrayed the Earps as a gang of stage robbers, engaged in a long-running feud with Ike Clanton after the OK Corral fight. Clanton repeatedly offered to meet Wyatt face-to-face; Wyatt repeatedly refused. Wyatt also organized a posse of family (including, remarkably, cousin Curly Bill Brocius) to track Clanton when he eloped with the Earps' sister Jessie. When the posse caught up with the couple, Wyatt again refused a man-to-man encounter with Clanton, sending out Julian Earp instead, who died from a Clanton bullet.

Of course, the story was nonsense. There were no Earps named Julian or Jessie, and Curly Bill was not Earp's relative, let alone an Earp partisan. However, one can see by this fictionalized account that the press early challenged Wyatt Earp's courage and character. In this version, Clanton was the man of courage and Earp was craven; in actuality, Clanton never personally challenged, let alone cowed, Wyatt Earp.

Still, articles trying to discredit Earp continued to appear. The Bakersfield, California, *Daily Californian* ran the headline, "Wyatt Earp is Cowed By Officer; Little Canadian Policeman Who Made Gun-Fighter Sing Small In Dawson," on August 27, 1903.

The accompanying story described Earp as arriving in the town of Dawson, in the Klondike. Upon finding the town similar to the ones of the old American West, he reverted to his ways as a "badman." Earp strapped on a gun and

began bullying people in the saloons and faro parlors until a five-foot-tall Canadian Mounted Policeman approached him and politely asked for Earp's gun. Earp bragged that he would send the little man to "hades," but the policeman persisted in a firm but polite manner, which eventually backed Earp down.

The article was preposterous, perhaps even cruel, but this was the sort of thing Earp's braggadocio invited. It was true that Earp and his wife, Josephine, followed the Alaskan gold rush in 1898. They were in Wrangell, Juneau, St. Michael, Rampart (which was 800 miles down the Yukon River from Dawson), and Nome; they never made it to Dawson. Further, the aging peace officer and his wife were in Alaska for profit, not to shoot up saloons and faro banks. The incident never happened.

In 1900, news of a silver strike leaked out of southern Nevada, sparking a rush into the Tonopah district. Although Earp had not been successful in prior mining endeavors, he hoped to do better in Nevada, and he and Josephine arrived in Nye County on January 28, 1902. Earp and an old friend, Al Martin, opened a saloon they called "The Northern" and planned to start a stage line and freighting business. Earp also served a few weeks in 1905 as a deputy U.S. marshal but soon his interests turned elsewhere and he and Josephine left for California.

On the night of April 6, 1906, Walter Berieau shot and killed Nye County Sheriff Thomas Logan at a brothel. Logan was very popular and on April 7 the *Tonopah Daily Sun* devoted an entire front page to the deceased officer. The reportage included an article headlined "He Cowed Earp." The story related how Logan stepped into the middle of a fight between Earp and another man, and prevented gunplay by talking Earp into giving up his guns.

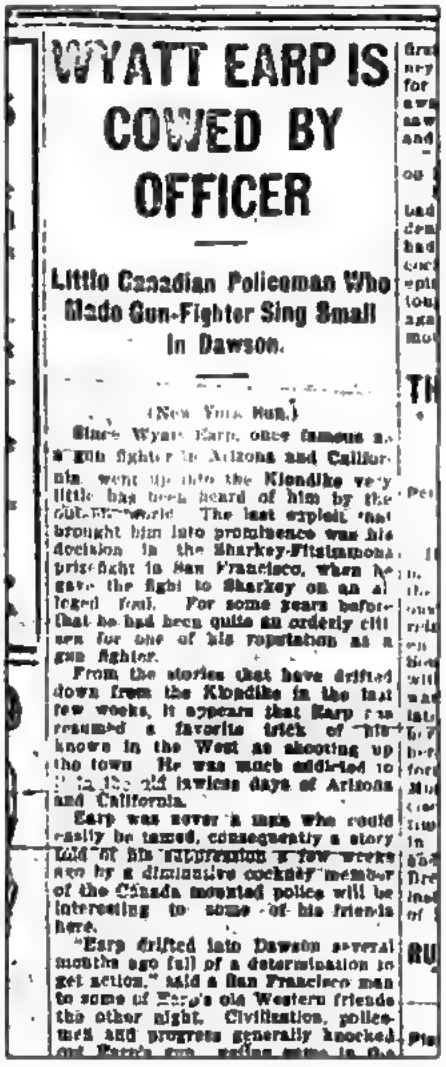
AGAIN, THERE is no supportive evidence that this dateless encounter between Wyatt Earp and Sheriff Logan ever occurred. Thomas Logan was a popular officer, and it befitted his obituary for him to have accomplished an extraordinary and courageous act in the face of a well-known gunman. Wyatt Earp had been in the area a short time before and, it appears, was selected to illustrate the story.

By the time these stories appeared, Wyatt Earp had long passed his gunfighting days. There may have been other, equally ridiculous, newspaper reports. However, Wyatt Earp had the last word. He lived until January 13, 1929, outlasting most of his contemporaries who could dispute his claims. Lake's biography of Earp appeared two years later.

Was Wyatt Earp "brave, courageous, and bold," or was he just a big bluffer as the newspaper articles seemed to imply? Certainly Earp pursued the often dangerous professions of saloon man, gambler, and peace officer in some tough areas of the American West. Wyatt's old comrade-in-arms, Bat Masterson, said in a 1907 edition of *Human Life* magazine that Wyatt Earp did indeed have the nerve and courage these frontier occupations required.

Courtesy of Nevada State Library and Archives

Author's Collection



WYATT EARP IS COWED BY OFFICER

Little Canadian Policeman Who Made Gun-Fighter Sing Small in Dawson.

(New York Sun.)

Since Wyatt Earp, once famous as a gun fighter in Arizona and California, went up into the Klondike very little has been heard of him by the outside world. The last exploit that brought him into prominence was his decision in the Sharkey-Fitzsimmons prize fight in San Francisco, when he gave the fight to Sharkey on an alleged foul. For some years before that he had been quite an orderly citizen for one of his reputation as a gun fighter.

From the stories that have drifted down from the Klondike in the last few weeks, it appears that Earp has resumed a favorite trick of his well known in the West as shooting up the town. He was much addicted to it in the old lawless days of Arizona and California.

Earp was never a man who could easily be tamed, consequently a story told of his subjugation a few weeks ago by a diminutive cockney member of the Canada mounted police will be interesting to some of his friends here.

"Earp drifted into Dawson several months ago full of a determination to get action," said a San Francisco man to some of Earp's old Western friends the other night. Civilization, policemen and progress generally knocked out Earp's gun-toting game in the

Left: Thomas Logan, sheriff of Nye County, Nevada, was killed by Walter Berieau on April 6, 1906. The mini-illustration in the top-left corner shows Logan disarming Earp. Right: The Bakersfield *Daily Californian*, on August 27, 1903, published a feature article about Wyatt Earp's being subdued and disarmed in the Klondike.

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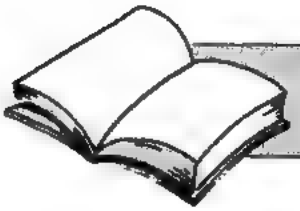

Books

Cherokees in the West

The Texas Cherokees: A People Between Two Fires, 1819–1840, by Dianna Everett. (University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Avenue, Norman, Oklahoma 73019. $21.95 cloth bound.)

Long before the notorious Trail of Tears in 1838–39, many Cherokees had already retreated west from land squabbles and growing white settlement. Some were living in the trans-Mississippi area in present-day eastern Arkansas and southeastern Missouri. By 1807 an expanding Cherokee population and sporadic clashes with wandering Osages had forced some Cherokees to seek a new home with more space.

Led by the Pascagoula chieftain Pinaye, a group arrived at Nacogdoches, the easternmost Spanish town in Texas, and sought permission to live between the Red and Trinity rivers. Spanish policy-makers of the day were quite willing to let the Cherokees live in the area, but the Cherokees soon realized they had become a living barrier between advancing Americans and Spanish settlements to the west. There were other problems. The Mexican government, under whose jurisdiction the Cherokees soon fell, was unstable; warfare with raiding Comanches mounted; and many other tribes, also fleeing the American frontier, were arriving in eastern Texas.

The Cherokees were uneasy witnesses to the Texas Revolution. Placed in an increasingly intolerable situation, they found themselves accused by both Mexicans and Texans as perfidious and self-serving. The Cherokees actually stayed neutral until the Texas victory at San Jacinto in April 1836, then threw in with the Texans. That decision drew internal debate from those Cherokees who thought they should remain loyal to old treaties with the Mexicans.

When the victorious Texans demanded the Cherokees and their neighboring tribes remove themselves to the newly-created Indian Territory, the Cherokees decided to fight for their lands. Their efforts culminated in a battle on July 16, 1839, in which the Cherokees and other tribes lost over one hundred warriors.

Defeated and demoralized, the remaining Cherokees and their allies splintered into small groups and wandered for weeks; eventually, most arrived safely in Indian Territory. There the Cherokees remained until the Civil War again forced them to choose sides.

As author Dianna Everett, who holds a doctorate in history from Texas Tech, says in the preface to this lively and informative book, *"The Texas Cherokees* is the story of a people valiantly attempting to exercise self-determination in the face of a broader process which they were able to affect but not completely control."—*Bill Garwood, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.*

Wyoming Badmen

Atlas of Wyoming Outlaws at the Territorial Penitentiary, by Elnora L. Frye. (Jelm Mountain Publications, 209 Park Street, Laramie, Wyoming 82070. $17.50 paper bound.)

The first prisoner arrived at the Wyoming territorial penitentiary in Laramie on January 13, 1873. From then until the last prisoner was transferred to a new penitentiary in Rawlins on June 4, 1904, some of the most famous outlaws in the West were jailed there. Butch Cassidy, his brother Dan Parker, Jim McCloud, Bob Curry, Dunc Blackburn, Kinch McKinney, and Charlie Ross were among them.

The author provides a brief biographical sketch of each convict based on information from convict registers, Bertillon files, court records, and newspapers. The sketches are arranged chronologically by the date a prisoner's sentence began, but are easily accessible through an alphabetical name index.

In detailed appendices, Frye provides data on territorial prisoners held at various prisons on a contractual basis. This system has often created a research problem, but Frye's book provides a much-needed solution. The book also gives a list of Wyoming's legal hangings, which, from 1868 to 1903, were done at county seats. This is the first time a complete record of these hangings has been made.

The volume is illustrated with a large number of well-reproduced, rare photographs from Wyoming and Nebraska prison files, many of which are previously unpublished. For example, there is one of a clean-shaven Doc Middleton, one of Harvey Logan's cousin Bob Lee, alias Bob Currie, and one of James Dale, alias Jim McCloud.

This book is much more than its title implies. Aside from being an excellent biographical compendium of early Wyoming outlaws, it also is a rather complete study of law and justice in Wyoming from its territorial days through its first decade of statehood. Both as a reference work and as interesting reading, this book deserves a place on the bookshelf of anyone interested in western outlaw history.—*Murray L. Carroll, Anacortes, Washington.*

New Mexico Gunfighters

When Six-Guns Ruled: Outlaw Tales of the Southwest, by Marc Simmons. (Ancient City Press, P.O. Box 5401, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502. $9.95 paper bound, $20.95 cloth bound.)

Well-known New Mexico historian Marc Simmons' latest book provides thumbnail sketches of outlaws and lawmen in New Mexico during the 1800s and early 1900s. Included are not only famous names, such as Billy the Kid and Clay Allison, but lesser-known figures like Vicente Silva, Russian Bill, the Hall gang, and the Stockton brothers. A chapter also deals with the short-lived New Mexico Mounted Police.

A gifted writer, Simmons has created an easy-to-read volume for those interested in outlaws and lawmen. It is not a scholarly book (nor was it intended as one) and does not contain footnotes or a bibliography; however, it does contain a list of suggested readings.

Although Simmons is obviously familiar with many of his topics, some folklore has found its way into the book, lending an inaccuracy to topics that other historians have previously resolved. Granted, this is a book of tales geared toward the general reader, and as such may be excused, but the author appears to be unfamiliar with such sources as Parson's biography of Clay Allison, or the works of Rasch, Keleher, and others—although this is impossible to say without a bibliography.

While the book cannot be taken as a definitive work of research, nevertheless Simmons has produced a number of fine sketches that can serve as a springboard for further research or stand alone as well-written tales. Simmons is a skilled

writer, and overall the book provides an enjoyable read for the general audience. His prose is fresh, and the topics for his book are never dull.—*Dave Johnson, Indianapolis, Indiana.*

Frontier Newswomen

Equal to the Occasion: Women Editors of the Nineteenth-Century West, by Sherilyn Cox Bennion. (University of Nevada Press, Reno, Nevada 89557-0076. $24.95 cloth bound.)

Sherilyn Cox Bennion has done a masterly job digging out information about women editors who were part of the working western press from 1854 to 1900. Students of newspaper history, and women journalists especially, will enjoy this previously unpublished material.

During the forty-six years encompassed by this study, California had the most women editors, with 129 out of 272. Most of them edited small-town weeklies, and most were editors for less than two years, although two percent edited their publications for more than twenty years. It was difficult for Bennion to pin down statistics, however, because women often owned and edited publications without acknowledgement.

The ages of the female editors varied from thirteen to eighty-six years. They promoted a range of causes, from abolition and temperance to suffrage and spiritualism.

Of the approximately thirty-five women editors Bennion describes, one of the most interesting is Caroline Churchill. She published a Denver, Colorado, periodical for sixteen years and became known by the name of her weekly newspaper, *The Queen Bee*. A contemporary newspaper said of Churchill, "With all her crankisms and vagaries, Sister Churchill is a brainy woman, and the tongue of scandal has never assailed her, although she has been snubbed and insulted by men thousands of times all over the West."

Just as their male counterparts did, female editors struggled against financial odds, professional competition, and harassment by those opposed to their views; some were harassed simply because they were women. However, most were accepted as individuals doing a job.

BOOK MART

Outlaws and Lawmen

261 When Six Guns Ruled: Outlaw Tales of the Southwest. By Simmons. Ancient City Press. $20.95c; $9.95p

035 West of Hell's Fringe: Crime, Criminals, and the Federal Peace Officer in Oklahoma Territory, 1889-1907. By Shirley. Top-notch history. 1990 rep. U. of Okla. Press. $16.95p

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164 My Girlhood Among Outlaws. By Lily Klasner; ed. Eve Ball. "An extraordinary book." 1988 rep. Univ. of Arizona Press. $13.95p

165 I Married Wyatt Earp. By Josephine S.M. Earp; ed. Glenn Boyer. "A captivating story." 1986 rep. Univ. of Arizona Press. $12.95p

166 The Wild Bunch at Robbers Roost. By Pearl Baker. Lively and informative. 1989 rep. Univ. of Nebraska Press. $7.95p

167 John Ringo: The Gunfighter Who Never Was. By Jack Burrows. Well documented overview. 1987 Univ. of Arizona Press. $21.95c

275 Mean as Hell: Life of a New Mexico Lawman. By Hurley. Lively autobiography. 1991 reprint. ACP. $10.95p

205 Rowdy Joe Lowe: Gambler with a Gun. By Rosa & Knop. "Rousing biography"—*True West*. 1989. Univ. of Oklahoma Press. $19.95c

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A Gathering of Westerners

Wild West Characters, by Dale Pierce. (Golden West Publishers, 4113 N. Longview Ave., Phoenix, Arizona 85014. $5.95 paper bound.)

This is a handy little book to have if you get into a Western trivia game. For example, how many of the following Wild West characters can you identify? Ira Aten, Fred Beell, Florentino Cruz, Susa Gates, Deaf Charlie Hanks, Johnny Behind the Deuce, Bill Longley, Elwood Mead, Perry Owen, Thomas Whaley.

Pierce's book contains brief vignettes of 113 colorful Western characters, ranging from criminals to judges, lawbreakers to lawmakers, and the well-known to the little-known. There are gunfighters, boxers, wrestlers, showgirls, writers, movie stars, politicians, miners, and a host of others.

Check your answers: Ira Aten was a Texas Ranger who became manager of the XIT Ranch; Fred Beell was a Southwestern wrestler who developed the "Beell Throw" and became world heavyweight champion; Florentino Cruz was a shifty hanger-on to the Clantons; Susa Gates was a daughter of Brigham Young who became a suffrage worker and author; Deaf Charlie Hanks was a member of the Wild Bunch who died in San Antonio; Johnny Behind the Deuce was a teenaged gambling sensation of 1880; Bill Longley was a gunfighter who realized his dream of hanging as a way to die; Elwood Mead was the promoter of irrigation for whom Lake Mead is named; Perry Owen was a foppish dandy lawman who killed Ike Clanton, turned in his badge, and died peacefully; and Thomas Whaley was a pioneer San Diego businessman whose ghost is said to still haunt the Whaley House.—*Francis L. Fugate, El Paso, Texas.*

Lincoln County War

Merchants, Guns and Money: The Story of Lincoln County and its Wars, by John P. Wilson. (Museum of New Mexico Press, P.O. Box 2087, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87503. $24.95 clothbound; $14.95 paper bound.

A historian or social critic may someday write about the continued fascination that Billy the Kid and the Lincoln County War has for us. Still, John P. Wilson has taken a step in that direction with his broader view of Lincoln County. He sees the Kid and the so-called war in a larger context. These bigger-than-life figures and events, when placed in perspective, are just one part of a county that has survived more violence than many countries.

This is an insider's look at Lincoln County, a view not only of violence but, more importantly, of money, politics, business, and social realities. It begins with the 1855 settlers and their struggles with Apaches and Comanches. It includes the Civil War, which had its own local importance even though the war in New Mexico was not as dramatic as in the east. Then there were the Horrell brothers, who rode through in 1873–74 and instigated the first "war."

The Lincoln County squabbles began mostly as political chicanery, with time out, of course, for the Pecos War. There were hangings, swindles, business openings and failures, beef contractors, and restless cowboys such as Billy the Kid and Jesse Evans.

Although Wilson's history still relies heavily on the Lincoln County War, by broadening his scope the author has added insight and a great deal of understanding. *Merchants, Guns and Money* is one of the most valuable Lincoln County books ever written. A reader interested in the Kid or the Lincoln County War simply cannot ignore it.—*Leon C. Metz, El Paso, Texas.*

Conflict With Mexico

The Mexican War Journal and Letters of Ralph W. Kirkham, edited by Robert Ryal Miller. (Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, Texas 77843-4354. $34.50 cloth bound.)

It is strange that the Mexican War has been so neglected by our writers. It is a large part of "Manifest Destiny"—the trans-Mississippi westward movement that many Anglo-Americans believed God had ordained. Robert Miller has done a splendid job of editing the heretofore unpublished manuscripts of Lt. Ralph W. Kirkham, who soldiered with Gen. Winfield Scott.

Here are details of little-known battles, such as San Antonio, and better-known ones like Churubusco, Chapultepec, and Molino del Rey. The Mexican

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Army was no push-over. Kirkham's outfit suffered 799 casualties at Molino del Rey—twenty-three percent of the 3,447 men engaged in combat. The Mexicans also had a savage ally—disease. Malaria and the *vomito* (yellow fever) made military funerals commonplace. Here also are details of occupied Mexico: of billets and bullfights, fandangos and funerals.

How ancient the Mexican War seems compared to, say, this reviewer's World War II! The idea of regimental bandsmen, in guerilla country armed only with musical instruments, is mind-boggling. So is the thought of lowly second lieutenants hiring personal laundresses and bringing from home their dogs, favorite horses, and servants (much like British Army batmen).

Yet how modern was the Mexican War, too. There was bickering among officers; explorer Benjamin Bonneville was accused of cowardice and court-martialed; and latrine rumors were of about the same value in Puebla in 1847 as they were in Luneville in 1944. And just as Italians were on both sides in the European Theater of Operations, the Mexican Army had Irish deserters from the U.S. Army in its San Patricio Battalion, while the U.S. Army had an oversized unit called the Mexican Spy (Scout) Company composed of Mexican Army deserters, turncoat guerrillas, and out-and-out *bandidos*. The more things change, the more they remain the same.—*Richard H. Dillon, Mill Valley, California.*

Violent Times in Indian Territory

Black, Red and Deadly. By Arthur T. Burton. (Eakin Press, P.O. Drawer 90159, Austin, Texas 78709-0159. $19.95 cloth bound.)

Indian Territory between 1870 and 1907 might well have qualified as the outlaw capital of the United States. From 1875 to 1896, Isaac C. Parker, the "Hanging Judge," administered justice from Fort Smith, Arkansas. During this time, Parker tried some 13,490 cases. Of the two hundred deputy U.S. marshals Parker appointed, sixty-five were killed in service. It was a violent time, and the times demanded tough and fearless men to tame the frontier.

Among those who rose to the challenge were many African American and Native American lawmen. While the general reader of lawman-outlaw history has probably heard of outlaws such as Ned Christie, Cherokee Bill, and Henry Starr, it is a rare individual who can recognize the names of Bass Reeves, Grant Johnson, or Sam Sixkiller, to mention only a few. It is fortunate for history that these men have been rescued from obscurity by a historian with Burton's obvious talents.

Burton provides an excellent overview of a too long neglected topic: the contributions of Native and African American lawmen and outlaws to western history. The result is a well-written and skillfully crafted history that will be a welcome addition to the libraries of all readers. The book's only major weakness is its lack of footnotes; complete references to sources could have aided other researchers on kindred topics. Nevertheless, Burton provides an extensive bibliography and quite obviously knows his material.

Among the lawmen covered, a number of whom gave their lives so that others could live without fear, Grant Johnson and Zeke Miller compiled records that would be the envy of most lawmen. Another, Bass Reeves (c. 1838–1910), emerges clearly as one of the book's leading lights. Reeves, born a slave, was raised in Texas but escaped to Oklahoma during the Civil War. He served as a peace officer second to none for some thirty-two years, arrested literally dozens of lawbreakers, and is reported to have killed fourteen men in personal encounters. Long ignored by historians, Reeves was a lawman of the first rank, who certainly deserves a full biography.

Others in the book were far less admirable—Rufus Buck and his gang of thugs who raped, robbed, and killed across Indian Territory, only to die together on Parker's gallows; or Dick Glass, a notorious whiskey peddler and horse thief who died in a hail of gunfire.

Shamefully, men such as Reeves and Johnson who risked their lives for others on a routine basis lived to see statehood with its infamous "Jim Crow" laws and other forms of racism passed into law by the very men they had served so well. That disgraceful legislation and the attitudes that spawned it relegated those men to the backwaters of history rather than honoring them as they deserved.

Certainly the book could have criticized the society which abandoned those men, but Burton refrains from personal attacks, and the result is a superior piece of work. He states the facts eloquently but leaves readers to draw their own conclusions. His theories and opinions are properly expressed as such. Future writers on controversial topics such as the Earps and Clantons, Reconstruction, and feuds, would do well to follow the example of objectivity in *Black, Red and Deadly.*

This skillfully crafted volume grips the reader's attention. Fans of outlaws and lawmen will find it a real treasure worth more than one reading, and anyone interested in the Old West will want it for his library.—*Dave Johnson, Indianapolis, Indiana.*

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Trails Grown Dim

Bethune

I am trying to research my family history. My mother's family names are Bethune, Coffman, Goodson, Johnson, Jackson, Robbins, Patterson, and Galloway. My great-grandfather fought in the Civil War. The family was from Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and the Carolinas. They settled in Texas after losing their homes in the war. Andrew Jackson was a distant cousin of mine. I will exchange information.—**Lailah Poteet Freeman, Route 1, Box 253B, Dayton, Texas 77535.**

Linley

I would like to find additional information about John R. Linley, M.D., who lived in the mid-1800s. He was born in Illinois about 1837. He was a surgeon and obstetrician and had a practice in the Oklahoma panhandle in a place called Beaver City between 1870 and 1890.

According to the 1890 census, he had three children, William, Irwin, and Lucy, all born in Illinois. His wife, Jenny, was born in Iowa and had to have been Dr. Linley's second wife as she was nineteen years old in the 1890 [illegible].

I would like to find out where Dr. Linley was born, and get more information about his parents.—**Robert W. Linley, Jr., 154 Elm Street, Monroe, Connecticut 06468.**

Douglass-Rutledge-Buckingham Weller-Martin

I am looking for information on several people. Nancy M. (maiden name unknown) Douglass Sorrels was born in 1845 in Missouri, and died in 1910 in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma. She was first married to a man with the last name of Douglass, about 1860, possibly in Baxter County, Arkansas. Their son, Joseph, was born on February 4, 1861, in Arkansas. Nancy married William Sorrels in 1866, also in Arkansas. Their oldest son was Thomas Chaplin. Could Chaplin have been Nancy's maiden name? Her parents were born in Missouri.

Joseph Douglass married a Melissa Jane in 1879. Her last name might have been Slaughter, Laughtin, Loftin, or Laughton. Their children were Laura, Sarah, Bettie, and William "Bert." Melissa's mother was also born in Missouri.

I am also looking for information about Stephen W. Rutledge, born in Tennessee in 1833, and died October 12, 1910, in Texas County, Missouri. He married Mary Massey, daughter of Richard Massey and Mary Alsup, in 1850 in Bledsoe County, Tennessee. Their son, John B. Rutledge, was born in 1853 in Giles or Lawrence County, Tennessee. He married Elizabeth Roark in 1870 in Missouri, and died in 1889 in Dent or Texas County, Missouri.

I also hope to find information about an Elizabeth Frances, whose last name was either Fowler or Buckingham. She was born in 1831 in Tennessee, and died April 3, 1901, in Douglas County, Missouri. She married James D. Martin in 1851 in Greene County, Missouri. Marriage records show her name as Buckingham, but her son John Isaac Martin's death certificate says his mother's maiden name was Fowler.

Elizabeth is believed to have come to Missouri from Tennessee before 1850 with a man named Duke to teach school at "Duke's School House," the first school at Fair Grove, Greene County, Missouri, built in 1846. On the 1850 Greene County, Missouri, census, Elizabeth appears in the household of Brittian Duke, a sixty-three-year-old man born in North Carolina.

Reuben Weller, the son of Henry and Mary Weller, was born in 1828 in Withyham Parish, Sussex County, England, and died in 1906 at Rich Hill, Bates County, Missouri. He married Charlotte Temple Vincent, daughter of George Vincent and Rachel Wilson, in Tazewell County, Illinois, in 1861. Reuben came to the United States

Readers' letters for "Trails Grown Dim" are printed as soon as space permits, so please be patient. Please type or print your query and limit letters to 150 words or less. Photos are welcome. We can't run current "missing persons" notices or lengthy genealogical requests, but we do attempt to print all letters as soon as we can. Any reader having information concerning persons referred to above is asked to communicate directly with the letter writer; please do not write to us.

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about 1855, supposedly escorting a sister to meet her husband. I am hoping to find the descendants of this sister.

Finally, I need to find the death place and burial site of Larkin Martin and his wife Thurza (Baker) Martin, or any of their children. The 1850 census shows the family in Greene County, Missouri. By 1860 they were in Howell County, Missouri. Their children were Nancy, Sarah, Jane, James D., John, William, Julia, Richard, David, Benjamin, Eliza, and Mary Virginia.—**Kay Roberts Martin, Route 4, Box 440-1, Oak Grove, Missouri 64075.**

Miller

I am searching for any information on the anscestors or descendants of May (Mae?) Miller; her birthdate, marriage date, or spouse are unknown. She may have been a nurse in the Winfield and Arkansas City, Kansas, or Blackwell, Oklahoma, areas in the early 1930s.—**R.S. Jones, 102 West Tyler, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74075.**

Lien

I am searching for any information about the Lien family. The first individual from this family came from Norway. I am a Lien born in California. I will be glad to exchange any information on the same family in California.—**Jamie K. Lien, E-33583, P.O. Box 29-A2-212, Represa, California 96671.**

Cartwright

I am looking for information on William Wesley Cartwright, who was born somewhere in Pennsylvania in 1825. He married Mary Francis Brown in Scioto County near Portsmouth, Ohio, in 1851. He was an iron worker and went to the gold rush in California in 1849.

I am also looking for any information on the Hudspeth families who came from Tennessee and settled in Searcy and Marion counties in Arkansas.—**Bonnie Cartwright, P.O. Box 26, Fifty-Six, Arkansas 72533.**

Hisey

I am trying to find descendants of Mary Emma Hisey, who was born June 12, 1860, in Corydon, Indiana. She married I.C. Goff on September 15, 1882, in Pueblo, Colorado.—**Darrell Hisey, 4628 Paw Trail, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37416.**

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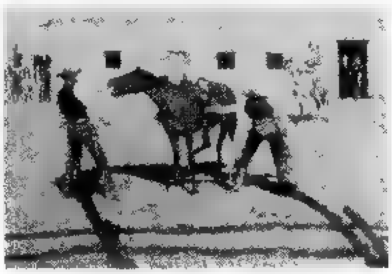

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Bill Doolin vs. Heck —August 25, 1896; Lawson,

By BILL O'NEAL

Born in Arkansas in 1858, Bill Doolin worked on the family farm until he was twenty-three years old. During his youth he became a crack shot on countless hunting forays. In 1881 he drifted into Oklahoma and spent a decade working as a cowboy on various ranches. In 1891 two constables were killed trying to break up a beer bust that Doolin had organized; no one knew who fired the fatal shots, but Doolin fled, fearing he would be blamed. He joined the Dalton gang and robbed banks and trains with them until a disastrous double bank holdup at Coffeyville, Kansas, in 1892. Perhaps because he had quarreled with Bob Dalton over how to divide the loot, or perhaps because his horse went lame, Doolin missed the ensuing massacre in which Coffeyville citizens killed or captured the Dalton gang members.

Marriage in 1893 to Edith Ellsworth did not dissuade Doolin from organizing his own gang. Doolin's "Oklahombres" included Bill Dalton, Charley Pierce, George "Red Buck" Waightman, Little Bill Raidler, Bob Grounds, Tulsa Jack Blake, Little Dick West, Dynamite Dick (Dan Clifton), Arkansas Tom Jones (Roy Daugherty), George "Bitter Creek" Newcomb, Alf Sohn, and Ol Yantis. Four days after a May 26, 1893, train robbery, a posse led by Chris Madsen jumped the gang. Although a steel-jacketed rifle bullet shattered Doolin's right foot, he led his men in a desperate ride to safety.

Author's Collection

Bill Doolin in death.

Between holdups the gang often drank and gambled in tiny Ingalls, Oklahoma. On September 1, 1893, a large posse closed in on the town and engaged Doolin and five of his men in a wild gun battle. Three officers were fatally wounded and Arkansas Tom Jones was captured; Doolin and the other four outlaws shot their way out of town.

For two years the gang special-

Thomas
Oklahoma—

ized in robbing banks. During a bank holdup in Southwest City, Missouri, on May 20, 1895, Doolin was wounded in the head but managed to stay in the saddle and gallop away with his men. Finally, Oklahoma's "Three Guardsmen"—peace officers Chris Madsen, Heck Thomas, and Bill Tilghman—led a concentrated search for Doolin and his band, but the fugitives eluded them. For a time Doolin found refuge at the New Mexico ranch of Eugene Manlove Rhodes, but soon he gravitated back to Oklahoma, where his wife and little boy stayed with her parents in Lawson.

IN JANUARY 1896 Doolin visited a health resort at Eureka Springs, Arkansas, seeking relief from the severe rheumatism that had developed around the bullet wound he had received in 1893. Although Tilghman captured Doolin at Eureka Springs, the prisoner escaped from a Guthrie, Oklahoma, jail the following July.

For several weeks Doolin slipped in and out of Lawson to visit his wife and son, and on the evening of August 25, 1896, he planned to move his family and possessions toward New Mexico. But Heck Thomas had been tipped off, and lawmen were stationed on both sides of the road. Thomas ordered Doolin to surrender, but the fugitive whipped up his rifle and began firing. A bullet from the posse knocked the Winchester from Doolin's hands, but he jerked his revolver and squeezed off a round or two before Thomas, firing a shotgun, blasted him to the ground. The possemen took Doolin's body to Guthrie, where examiners counted twenty-one holes in the corpse; they later determined that four buckshot had entered Doolin's heart.

A grisly photograph was taken of Doolin's bullet-riddled remains, and another was snapped after the outlaw was dressed and placed in a casket. Edith Doolin arrived in Guthrie later; she and a friend were the only mourners at Bill Doolin's funeral.

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Babylon of the West

By CHERYL LANDES

Sometime during the late 1880s, a newcomer drove a buckboard into Ruby at a gallop. He wore a white plug hat, which tempted a marksman to put a bullet through it. After the greenhorn recovered from his fright, the marksman offered to buy him a drink and said, "I believe I'd get a regular hat. That plug is so attractive that some other guy who ain't such a good shot may take a chance on it."

Episodes like that were commonplace in Ruby, a roaring mining community in north central Washington. It grew practically overnight after the United States government opened the Colville Indian reservation for settlement. In 1887, quartz ledges bearing pockets of silver and small amounts of gold were discovered near Salmon Creek. Miners and prospectors with dreams of instant wealth arrived from all over the Northwest. Population estimates during the peak of the boom ranged from six hundred to one thousand.

Ruby was perhaps known more for its immorality than its silver; in fact, the town was so wild that outsiders nicknamed it the "Babylon of the West." Saloons, gambling houses, and brothels dominated the social scene. "This is a healthy country," one miner wrote. "I have been here two years and there has not been a natural death yet."

Shootings were common. In an interview for the *Seattle Times*, pioneer Ed Bown recalled attending a Fourth of July celebration in Ruby. An Indian named Pokemiakin was arrested for stealing a valuable race horse. Bullets flew as the Indian tried to flee, and the animal was shot out from under him before he was captured.

On another occasion, miners shot out the front windows of Billie Darwin's hotel when Jonathan Bourne, one of the owners of the largest mine in Ruby, was staying there. He had refused to raise the miners' pay.

Guy Waring, another pioneer, recalled a more bloody dispute in his book, *My Pioneer Past*. Late one night, an unruly drunken citizen tried to enter the town's primary brothel. The madame of the house, annoyed at being disturbed, refused him admittance. The man became angry and took a swing at her. Then the madame, who was known for always wanting to have the last word in an argument, returned to her room, got her revolver, and shot him through the heart. The man died instantly.

The man's body was found crumpled upon the steps outside the brothel, and before the sheriff could be persuaded to investigate, the madame had already boarded the stage for Spokane Falls. She knew that as soon as another scandal developed, she could return unnoticed and reopen her business.

"After I listened to a group of citizens expound the merits of the case," Waring wrote, "I gained a still better idea of the level of morality one could expect to find in Ruby. No one cared much about the actual facts of the murder. The chief point of dispute was whether or not the madame had taken a previous dislike to her unwelcomed client because of the damage he had done to her staff of girls—for it was generally known in Ruby, I learned, that the gentleman's much-discussed limp had been caused by neither infantile paralysis, rheumatism, nor any other common form of affliction or accident!"

Because of the colorful characters in town, public celebrations were popular. One private event that soon became highly publicized happened on Christmas Eve 1887. While hard rock miners were happily spending their wages on liquor in the town's largest saloon, news came that a baby boy was just born at George W. Carpenter's home. The infant was the first white boy born in Okanogan County.

These customers appointed a delegation of "three wise men" to call on Carpenter and carry him off to the bar to be toasted. At the height of the rowdy tribute, he was hoisted to the counter and requested to name his son Ruby. In return for honoring the town, he would be rewarded with a city lot. The crowd took up a collection to pur-

Okanogan County Historical Society

One of the working mines in Ruby, Washington, in the late 1800s

chase the land, and presented the deed at Arthur Ruby Carpenter's christening—a champagne celebration.

Livelier festivities occurred when Ruby became the first county seat of Okanogan County. Until 1888, the Okanogan country was part of Stevens County. The territorial legislature that year adopted a measure creating Okanogan County and naming three temporary county commissioners (one of whom was Waring) to organize the new government, appoint its first officers, and select a temporary county seat. The commissioners met at John Perkins' ranch on Johnson Creek, four miles north of Ruby, on March 6, 1888.

ALTHOUGH RUBY hadn't been named county seat yet, many residents had already started celebrating. Waring described the scene. "It was an occasion I shall never forget. The people of Ruby, hearing of the meeting, all turned out to hold a noisy celebration in our honor. Whores, thieves, and drunkards, and other notorious citizens of the mining town were on hand some time before the oath of office was administered. They were of course agreeably drunk, and serenaded us so loudly that it was difficult for anybody inside the ranch house to hear himself speak."

During its brief period as county seat, Ruby's government headquarters was a small shack; records were kept in ordinary notebooks. Liquor licenses were the primary source of revenue and, as the county had no safe, treasurer E.C. Sherman put the $1,800 he had received from taxes into an empty baking powder can and buried it on his ranch.

The question of selecting a permanent location for the county seat appeared on the ballot later in 1888. Concunully received the honor, and the transfer was completed in February 1889.

Ruby never became the "second Comstock" as some geologists predicted. In 1893 the boom ended when silver prices fell sharply, and the town died a rapid death. It was entirely deserted by 1899. Today, only a few foundations, overgrown with grass, remain to mark the bustling mining town remembered as the "Babylon of the West."

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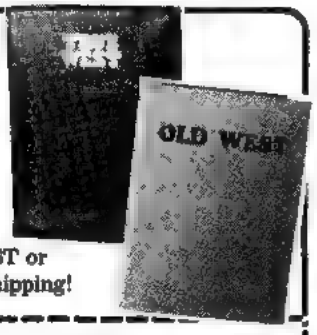

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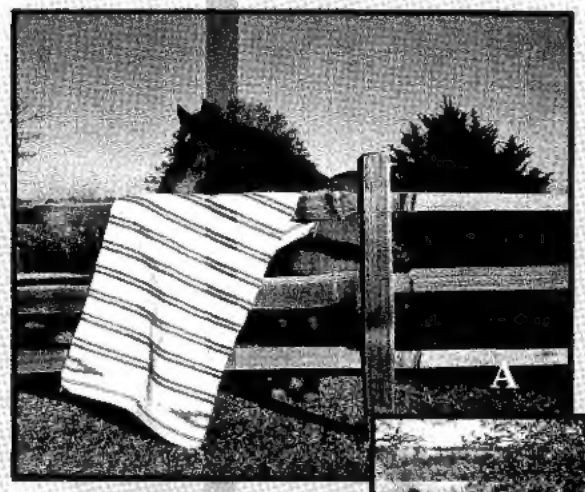

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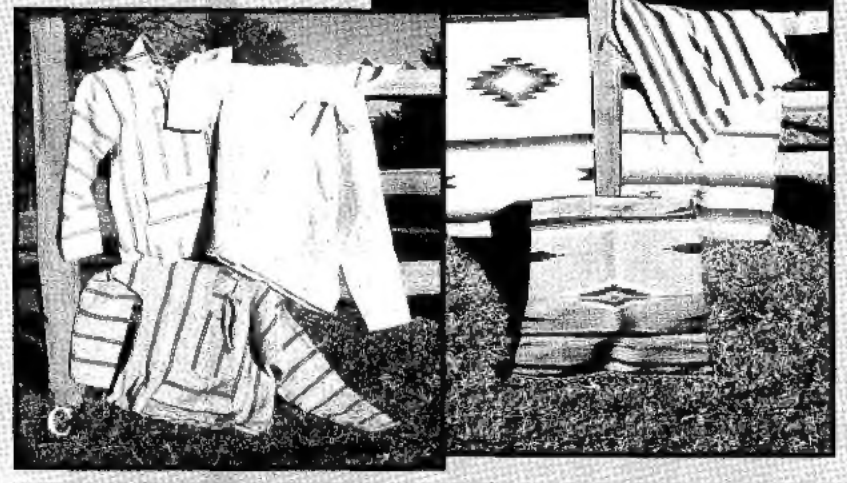

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